

HOW CHRISTIANITY WAS INVENTED

Essay

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CONTENTS

Preface	3
Chapter 1 The Great Historian	7
Chapter 2 Josephus or the Evangelists	19
Chapter 3 Birthdates Confused	37
Chapter 4 Four Unknown Greek Writers	50
Chapter 5 The Gospel Script	56
Chapter 6 From Judas to Jesus	60
Chapter 7 Expecting the Messiah	66
Chapter 8 The Historical Jesus	73
Chapter 9 Two Natures in Conflict	83
Chapter 10 The Other Jesus	93
Chapter 11 My Books Tell the Truth	108
Chapter 12 How Christianity Was Invented	114
Chapter 13 <i>Testimonium Flavianum</i> Fraud	119
Chapter 14 In Conclusion	128
Bibliography	133

PREFACE

The subject of the Historicity of the life of Jesus of "Nazareth" and the questions it raised have agitated the thoughts and disturbed the dreams of people of nearly every rank and class over the Western world, for the last five hundred years. Following the hegemonic centuries of Church dominion, interest in the mystery of the origin of Christianity, within the Jewish world of the remote Judean Province of the Roman Empire, has grown unabated.

The German High Critics of the Nineteenth century exemplified by Strauss, and the French Rationalists of the Ernest Renan persuasion, have greatly eroded the religious faith attached to the Gospel narratives, due to their intense study and profound scholarship.

The theory developed by David Friedrich Strauss in his *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (1835) was that Jesus is the *impersonation* of an ideal of purely mythic derivation: having existed in *idea*, he was afterwards conceived to have had a corresponding existence in *fact*. His view was partly supported and partly contradicted by the Church theology, which, while it asserts in confirmation that "*Jesus was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*," it also asserts in opposition that he was slain *again* in the flesh when Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea, around 31CE. But this theory is unsatisfactory, because it is not historically grounded, and because no authentic historical explanation is supplied to account for the rise and spread of the traditional belief.

Ernest Renan's theory, as given in his romantic *Vie de Jesus* (1863) was as fanciful in conception as that of Strauss, and was formed in equal disregard of historical accuracy. His chief interest rests in the beauty and

sublimity of the moral teachings of Jesus, as these are reported by the four Evangelists. Renan emphasizes the Jesus character's basic self-consciousness, which, he maintains, because it is absolutely *human*, boldly asserts itself to be equally *divine*.

Both these theories rather reflect the philosophical opinions of their respective authors than any sound criticism of history. Most of the books published in the past fifty years have mainly repeated or amplified the same arguments. Yet, the English-speaking public, generally intensely conservative, is prone to look with skepticism on any departure from ancestral beliefs. It was therefore deemed essential by this author to reopen the case *for* or *against* the historical reality of Jesus, as the answers are of transcendental consequences for believers and unbelievers alike.

The various Christian Churches and the Western World in general have in a higher degree accepted the traditional narratives handed down from the time of Constantine, the first Roman Emperor to officially recognize Christianity as State-protected, in 325CE. A honest search for documentary proof of the facts has led the author of this Essay to seriously question the historical value of the records known today as "*Apostolic Writings*" and "*Early Church Fathers*" – as this has been abundantly discussed in the scholarly volumes of Emil Walter, Arthur Heulhard, Robert Eisler and others referred to in this work. But the surprising development was the rediscovery of genuine historical accounts confirming the existence of certain authentic "*Messianic*" characters alive within the geographical setting and timeframe alluded to by the Christian Tradition. George Solomon wrote *The Jesus of History and the Jesus of Tradition Identified* in 1880, in which he severely condemns the Christian religion as a heresy from the Jewish beliefs, opening up a theological debate that went beyond historical considerations. Solomon, however, clearly

indicated the keys necessary to entangle the greatest of the mysteries of History. This Essay will, therefore, leave out the conflicting theological arguments from the case and, while relying on George Solomon's impeccable research, offer conclusive evidence to prove that the story of the traditional Jesus is a garbled development from a historical root.

For the first time in recent years, we shall strive to introduce to the modern public the real Jesus as known to history, before his figure was distorted by popular belief and hopefully solve the riddle of *How Christianity was Invented*.

CHAPTER I

The Great Historian

To write about Jesus at the dawn of the twenty-first century, in a world greatly polarized between religious fundamentalism and philosophical materialism may seem bold, to say the least. However, as it shall appear, we are forced into the arena in the simple interest of truth. Belief in the inerrancy of the Biblical records, particularly the texts that constitute the *New Testament* and their legitimacy to provide us with divinely uttered answers to Humanity's queries, is still high among many people. But is this tacit acceptance of the stories told by the four evangelists, and other Christian writers, really reasonable? Are we certain to possess the actual facts as they happened so long ago? Can we base our metaphysical convictions on such foundations?

Public opinion has it that so many churches cannot be wrong: the testimony of Scriptures must be right. So many generations of writers, poets and highly respected Churchmen would not have been mistaken. We all have placed implicit trust in whatever our forefathers have handed down to us as truth. But, is it *The Truth*? Can we prove or disprove it?

It will be our business to show that the history of the events recorded in the Gospel writings is partly confirmed and partly refuted by a writer who lived contemporarily with the events themselves. It will be our business also, to prove that the narratives known as the four Gospels were indeed composed many years, if not centuries, after the period the events spoken of did occur. We will eventually explain how the Greek scribes compounded several historical characters into one, actually creating a mysterious personage with at least two widely conflicting personalities.

The traditional accounts given by the Apostolic writings of the so-called *Messianic age* are not, therefore, fancy pictures. But their chronology is very seriously at fault, while certain key events and historical characters are literally substantiated by the great contemporary historian referred to.

It has been said that a true historian is one who carefully sifts the pages of documents genuinely confirming the simplest events of his or past generations, always giving the fairest, balanced and, as much as possible, unbiased testimony to be passed on as history to his present and future readers. A difficult task it is and few are the ones that succeed in deserving the title. Even Herodotus, the reputed “Father of History” hardly met the challenge. Julius Caesar probably came closer to this definition in his *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*, though many disagree. Edward Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* still ranks high in our list. Unfortunately History is written by *victors* and mostly reflects one side of the stories, even opinions about what they think happened in reality.

Who was, then, this great contemporary historian of the period of the birth of the Jesus Story? And what sort of historian was he, if we are to trust his testimony so explicitly?

The internet site www.ultimatebiblereferencelibrary.com has the following introduction to their publication of the complete works of Flavius Josephus: “Josephus was born Joseph ben Mattathias in 37CE. in Jerusalem of a priestly and royal family. He excelled in his studies of Jewish law and studied with the Sadducees, Pharisees, and the Essenes, eventually aligning himself with the Pharisees. In 62CE, he went to Rome to free some imprisoned priests. After accomplishing this mission through the intercession of Nero's wife, Poppaea, he returned to

Jerusalem in 65CE to find the country in revolt against Rome. Although Josephus had deep misgivings about the revolt, it became inevitable, due to reasons he discusses in his history, primarily the abuses of the Romans; this spurred the growth of fanatical Messianic Jewish movements which believed that the world was coming to an end shortly. In 66CE, Masada was seized by the Zealots and the Romans were on the march; Josephus was appointed the commander of Galilee.

“Josephus had to fight a defensive war against overwhelming force while refereeing internecine squabbles in the Jewish ranks. In 67CE, Josephus and other rebels were cornered in a cave during the siege of Jotapata and took a suicide pact. However, Josephus survived, and was taken hostage by the Romans, led by Vespasian.

“Josephus shrewdly reinterpreted the Messianic prophecies. He predicted that Vespasian would become the ruler of the 'entire world'. Josephus joined the Romans, for which he was branded a traitor. He acted as consultant to the Romans and a go-between with the revolutionaries. Unable to convince the rebels to surrender, Josephus ended up watching the second destruction of the Temple and the defeat of the Jewish nation. His prophecy became true in 68CE when Nero committed suicide and Vespasian became Caesar. As a result, Josephus was freed; he moved to Rome and became a Roman citizen, taking the Vespasian family name Flavius. Vespasian commissioned Josephus to write a history of the war, which he finished in 78CE, the *Jewish War*. His second major work, the *Antiquities of the Jews*, was completed in 93CE. He wrote *Against Apion* in about 96-100CE and *The Life of Josephus*, his autobiography, about 100CE. He died shortly after.

“Despite his ambivalent role, Josephus was an eyewitness to history, and his writings are considered

authoritative. These texts are key to understanding a pivotal point in world history, which has tragic repercussions even to this day. J. B. H.”

We have preferred this brief introduction of Josephus’s life to begin our study as it translates the generally good opinion entertained by modern-day scholars about this ancient writer. In fact we could complement the record with details supplied by the historian himself in his *Autobiography*. Though he was not liked by all equally, as intimated in the quote given, he had the reputation of historic justice and impartiality above many of the ancient historians of the Roman Empire. In his own days, he was respected for his sagacious intellect and wide experience of affairs. He prided himself to be known as a lover of truth “*neither concealing anything nor adding anything to the known fact of things*”, as he tells us. He did what in him lay to clear the minds of his countrymen of false ideas of their past history, and made it a point of conscience to transmit to posterity a faithful record of contemporary events, and he did so for the express purpose of guarding posterity against being deceived by the numerous spurious accounts in circulation, whose falsehoods were known to him.

Is it not surprising, then, seeing that Josephus possessed such pre-eminent qualifications, and that he is by express definition the historian of the *Messianic age*, — about the events of which there has been more disputation than about those of any other period of history, — that no inquiry has ever been instituted or analysis attempted to establish a parallel, if any, between his account of the time and that of those chroniclers who have since his day gained the ear of Christendom, — a time clearly so important in the make-up of the memory of a greater part of our Western Culture.

Matthias, the father of Josephus, was a man of eminence in the Jewish state and *a contemporary of Pontius Pilate*;

and the son, in his account of his times, speaks thus of his parent: — "Now, my father Matthias was not only eminent on account of his nobility, but had a higher commendation on account of his righteousness; and was in great reputation in Jerusalem, the greatest city we have." So high-ranking a position he occupied that his son was conferred an appointment as Governor in Galilee. In fact Matthias was connected by family with the High Priesthood of the Hasmonean (Maccabee) line. He lived in the days, as we have said, of Pontius Pilate, and must therefore, according to Apostolic writings, have been a contemporary of Jesus. We must therefore consider him not only a primary witness, but an active participant in those great events which, according to the same authorities, in those days, owing to their marvelous character, *astonished* the Jerusalem world. He must, if their account is correct, have seen or known of the rent in the Temple occasioned by the earthquake which is said to have occurred when Jesus was crucified. He must have known the doctrine of Jesus as taught by himself in his frequent preaching both in and out of the Temple. He must have familiarly known those about the Temple whose diseases were miraculously cured by Jesus, and of the thousands who, with more or less of rapt enthusiasm, as these authorities assure us, followed him as "*the desire of all nations*," and of others as "*the consolation of Israel*." His knowledge of the occurrences of the time could not, owing to his position, have been less than that of the common people, not to say the very women and children of the district. Indeed, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem must have either seen or heard of those wonderful miracles which are recorded as the distinctive badge of the Prophet of Nazareth and the pledge of his Messiahship.

Is it credible that the father should have been familiar with all this, and the son know nothing of it? - That this diligent and faithful historian of the period should have been ignorant of what his own father knew as an actual

eye-witness? Or could the father, had he wished, have concealed from the son what was known to the entire generation?

Is it conceivable that the Christian sect could have existed in Judea, and its tenets been embraced by his countrymen, without the knowledge of Josephus, who lived in their midst, and who was precisely of that turn of mind to take the deepest interest in a movement which bore so directly on those very political and religious, as well as philosophical, questions which agitated the time, and which he himself held of such importance as a thinker, a statesman, and a Pharisee?

Let us hear Josephus telling of his turn of mind, his sympathies and thirst for knowledge of all the sects thriving among his countrymen – except, amazingly, the new religion taught by Jesus, of which, however, he says nothing: “I was,” he says, “myself brought up with my brother, whose name was Matthias, for he was my own brother, by both father and mother; and I made mighty proficiency in the improvement of my learning, and appeared to have both a great memory and understanding. Moreover, when I was a child, and about fourteen years of age, I was commended by all for the love I had to learning; on which account the high-priests and principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the law. And when I was about sixteen years old, I had a mind to make trial of the several sects that were among us. These sects are three: — the first is that of the Pharisees, the second that of the Sadducees, and the third that of the Essenes, as we have frequently told you; for I thought that by this means I might choose the best, if I were once acquainted with them all; so I contented myself with hard fare, and underwent great difficulties, and went through them all. Nor did I content myself with these trials only; but when I was informed that one whose name was *Banus* lived in

the desert, and used no other clothing than grew upon trees, and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently, both by night and by day, in order to preserve his chastity, I imitated him in those things and continued with him three years. So when I had accomplished my desires, I returned back to the city, being now nineteen years old, and began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees, which is of kin to the sect of the Stoics, as the Greeks call them."

It is not too much to say that Josephus in this gives evidence of a strongly religious turn of mind that, early, led him to investigate minutely the claims and tenets of the separate sects of his day, in order to adapt or adjust himself to the one he might, after conscientious study, find to be the best entitled to his support.

He actually spent three years with this *Banus*, (53-56CE) who looks not unlike John *the Baptizer*, the so-called forerunner and cousin of Jesus. And in all this we see no trace of any dogmatic prejudice. How comes it, then, that he utterly makes no mention in the least of the Christian sect, though what he says was written after the fall of Jerusalem (70CE), long after the recall of Pontius Pilate, under whose procuratorship the chief act in the Christian drama is said to have taken place? Is it rational to suppose that so painstaking an inquirer and accurate a writer, surrounded by the Christian sect too, should never name that sect at all; Can we believe that the Christian sect was in existence at this period at all?

To convince our readers of the desire of this historian to furnish the fullest particulars of all the sects of philosophy that flourished at the period, it will be enough to introduce here an extract or two to the purpose from his works. In Book xviii of the *Antiquities*, chap. I. §§ 2-6, he writes as follows: — "*The Jews had for a great while three sects of philosophy peculiar to themselves;*

the sect of the Essenes and the sect of the Sadducees, and the third sort of opinions was that of those called Pharisees; of which sects, although I have already spoken in the second book of the Jewish War, I will yet a little touch upon them now.

"Now, *for the Pharisees*, they live meanly, and despise delicacies in diet; and they follow the conduct of reason; and what that prescribes to them as good for them, they do; and they think they ought earnestly to strive to observe reason's dictates for practice.

"They also pay a respect to such as are in years; nor are they so bold as to contradict them in anything which they have introduced; and when they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not take away the freedom from men of acting as they think fit; since their notion is, that it hath pleased God to make a temperament whereby what He wills is done, but so that the will of man can act virtuously or viciously. They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again; on account of which doctrines they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people; and whatsoever they do about divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform them according to their direction; insomuch that the cities gave great attestations to them on account of their entire virtuous conduct, both in the actions of their lives and their discourses also.

"But *the doctrine of the Sadducees* is this: That souls die with the bodies; nor do they regard the observation of anything besides what the law enjoins them; for they think it an instance of virtue to dispute with those teachers of philosophy whom they frequent. But this doctrine is received only by a few, yet by those still of

the greatest dignity; but they are able to do almost nothing of themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them.

"*The doctrine of the Essenes* is this: That all things are best ascribed to God. They teach the immortality of souls, and esteem that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for; and when they send what they have dedicated to God into the Temple, they do not offer sacrifices, because they have more pure lustrations of their own; on which account they are excluded from the common court of the Temple, but offer their sacrifices themselves; yet is their course of life better than that of other men, and they entirely addict themselves to husbandry. It also deserves our admiration, how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue, and this in righteousness; and indeed to such a degree, that as it had never appeared among any other men, neither Greeks nor barbarians, no, not for a little time; so hath it endured a long while among them. This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs, which will not suffer anything to hinder them from having all things in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who hath nothing at all. There are about four thousand men that live in this way; and neither marry wives nor are desirous to keep servants, as thinking the latter tempts men to be unjust, and the former gives the handle to domestic quarrels; but as they live by themselves, they minister one to another. They also appoint certain stewards to receive the incomes of their revenues, and of the fruits of the ground; such as are good men and priests, who are to get their corn and their food ready for them. They none of them differ from others of the Essenes in their way of living, but do the most resemble those *Dacae* who are called *Polistae* (dwellers in cities).

"*But of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy* Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only ruler and lord. They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor, indeed, do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord; and since this immovable resolution of theirs is well known to a great many, I shall speak no farther about that matter; nor am I afraid that anything I have said of them should be disbelieved, but rather fear that what I have said is beneath the resolution they show when they undergo pain; and it was in *Gessius Florus's* time [64-66CE] that the nation began to go mad with this distemper, who was our procurator, and who occasioned the Jews to go wild with it by the abuse of his authority, and to make them revolt from the Romans: and these are the sects of Jewish philosophy."

The quotations just made from Josephus clearly establish two historical facts. The first is, that there existed in Judea in the days of Josephus only four religious communities, namely the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the sect founded by Judas the Galilean; each of which is so described as plainly to show that, while the peculiar Christianity of the Church had no existence in any one of them, there is in one or another a greater or lesser approximation to the Christianity that is said, in the New Testament, to have existed in the days of the Apostles: a distinction which it is necessary to draw; for those who now profess the Christian religion do not practice that asceticism to which we call attention as distinguishing alike the practice of the Essenes and that of the new sect which was led by Judas the Galilean. The second fact which these quotations establish is this: That the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and that of reward or punishment in a future world for a virtuous or vicious life in the present, did not originate with Jesus,

and that, if professed by him, as is alleged by the Apostolic writers, they are not originally attributable to him, but must have been simply adopted by him from these sects, and they are not, therefore, as alleged, new divine revelations.

Now, the Apostles are said to have been Galileans, and to have asserted that there was a new sect founded in Galilee by Jesus, while Josephus asserts there was a new sect founded in Galilee by Judas. The only difference in this respect between the two accounts lies in the distinction between the name Judas and the name Jesus, and some commentators deem this distinction so slight as to define the one to be equivalent to the other (see *New Discoveries in the Origin of Christianity* by Emil Walter & *Le Mensonge Chrétien* by Arthur Heulhard, or *The Three Messiahs* by Daniel T. Unterbrink.) If, therefore, we were to affirm the identity of these two, the facts of history might well seem to warrant the deduction; for Josephus, as we have seen, mentions only one new sect as having arisen in his day, and if Judas and Jesus are not the same, it would be necessary to conclude that there were either two founders of the one new sect, or else two new sects, contrary to the express testimony of his contemporary evidence.

In any case, there is clear evidence of the truth of Josephus' version, that there were four philosophical sects only, — one of which, as is explained by him, was of recent origin, and founded by Judas of Galilee; that the Christian sect, as such, was not only not recognized at the time, but that it did not exist until a later period; and that it was not till a much later period that the so-called Gospel and Apostolic accounts were written and received as genuine tradition.

It would then appear that those who committed them to writing as authentic have put together what they could gather from far and near of memories presumed to refer

back to the direct testimony of eye-witnesses, some of whom ranked as Apostles. As we proceed, positive proof will be adduced to show that this is really the proper view of the case; and we shall, in the course of our argument, furnish testimony to this effect from the so-called writings of the Apostles themselves, which ought at least to have weight with those who have confidence in their value, and thus contribute to bring about a better agreement between the different accounts of the period.

CHAPTER II

Josephus or the Evangelists

The Christian Churches insist, and have all along insisted, on deriving the account of the first beginnings of Christianity from writers of a *later age* than that in which the related events occurred. Critics of all sides wonder why only authors were chosen, who lived in a different country and wrote in an alien tongue, and who knew nothing of what they record except through foreign report from the original scene of the events. The story appears rooted in no firmer basis than that of *mere hearsay testimony*. Surely the most reasonable source from which to obtain a reliable account of the facts alleged would be the history of Josephus, himself, who was a contemporary of the *apostolic age*, who lived on the spot and wrote of the period. This indeed is what we may at the least expect in the case of the historian who assumes the task of recording events known to his contemporaries; but it so happens that none of the so-called “*Church Fathers*” or their followers ever consider the historical testimony given by Josephus, except brief references by Eusebius Pamphilius in his *Church History* (324CE).

This is the task we have deemed necessary to complete: to compare the so-called writings of the Apostles, which were of a later origin, and were certainly compiled *after* the publication of Josephus' *Histories*, with the circumstantial records of the events precisely given by this historian, extending, not only from the days of Herod the Great, but coming down to the very destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, in 70CE.

If Josephus had not noticed any of the incidents recorded in the apostolic accounts, we would have the strongest presumptive proof of his untruthfulness. But he was a

statesman who took part in the epoch-making events of the day and carefully reported them as an accurate historian. If Josephus piques himself, or is entitled to pique himself, on any virtue at all, it is on his fidelity and fairness; and it is inconceivable to suppose that he, of all writers, should have dared, in a narrative expressly of his own times, to have omitted to chronicle what was matter of such universal notoriety.

Now, we must also evaluate the character and qualifications of the Gospel writers and Apostles from the point of view of the events themselves and having done this, proceed with our planned comparison of their testimony against Josephus' own and decide which party has the best claim to our confidence. We have only to examine the documents themselves to convince ourselves at first hand of their respective worth and un-worth as historical records.

In the pages of the so-called apostolic writings, critics have easily detected flagrant contradictions more numerous than we would expect from any documents laying claim to historical authority, while the pages of Josephus show a candor of mind, a coherence of narration, and a conscientiousness of description, which stamp him as entirely worthy of the character for truth he enjoyed in his lifetime; The Apostles' testimony is given in such a fast-and-loose way as to shake all confidence in their veracity as historians. Most critics have highlighted examples of open forgery or falsified quotations from the Old Testament texts. The relation in which Josephus and the Evangelical writers stand to the Biblical accounts shows what historical value is to be attached to their separate narratives. His version is always true to the letter of the original documents (half of his *Antiquities* is made of quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures,) while theirs are plagued with misunderstanding of the text and misapplications. But our inquiry must remain on a strictly historical and not a religious arena — refer to matters of

fact and not matters of beliefs; Either Josephus has written falsely or they have written falsely; they cannot be both true, for they are in direct conflict. And there is one set of assertions of a historical nature in which, to his vindication, it will be found, as we have just remarked, he is right and they are wrong, and that is in their respective quotations from the Old Testament: his are always genuine and true to the original, while theirs, partly distorted, partly forged, are all more or less taken in a sense and used for a purpose never meant or intended; and this, moreover, to lend them weight of divine authority.

With these preliminary remarks in support of our view which must be taken of the general historical trustworthiness of the two authorities in question, we will now proceed with our inquiry as to their respective credibility in regard to the Christian era and the incidents connected with it.

Thus far we have Josephus introduced to us with a character for historical truthfulness and honesty, while the Apostles, on the contrary, come before us with a reputation for the opposite, a charge which their disrespect or ignorance of the ancient and sacred historical Scriptures too plainly justifies. But the Evangelical writers show inconsistency in their statements and discrepancy of their accounts with one another. And this fact alone — which is a notorious one — might well lead us, were there no other, to expect greater discrepancies still between them and Josephus. Nor is it surprising that they should be so inaccurate in their historical statements; for they wrote on *hearsay*, and the history of the events they relate they gathered, as they themselves avow, from *traditions* which they received from more or less colored sources, whilst Josephus had opportunities of obtaining information from the records of the day and from the most authentic witnesses, his own father, mother, and brother having been

contemporaries of Pontius Pilate, and he himself in daily association with the ruling families in Jerusalem. He was afterwards governor of Galilee, too, and as such must have had access to all the public archives. He must, if they existed, have been familiarly acquainted also with the younger contemporaries of Jesus, his Apostles, and the generation that immediately succeeded. He must, moreover, have seen springing up around him the Christian churches, and their growing congregations of worshippers, and been aware of the great and wonderful faith they professed and deeds they performed; and yet he deliberately says, and sets it down as authentic unchallengeable history, that *while there were three sects of ancient date, there was only one of recent origin*, the one founded by Judas of Galilee. If the Evangelical accounts be true, Josephus must have written this in the very teeth of the Christian community rising up everywhere under his eyes, and that in terms which challenged his contemporaries to deny and in any way question the truth of his statements.

While, therefore, it is not to be supposed that a set of men, situated as the Evangelists were, *many years after the events* and dependent upon merely traditional reports, could supply an accurate historical relation of *these events*, and it is unreasonable to expect of them the historical reliability of statement which we look for and find in an author with the opportunities of Josephus, we are not, however compelled to conclude that the Evangelical accounts are altogether fabulous. They could not have grown up except on some basis of fact, colored though that was, so as to be almost invisible, to support the religious creed of which it was supposed to be the revelation. Indeed we find one of the Evangelists, Luke, expressly insisting that the Christian gospel is grounded on fact, and referring to the evidence of testimony in proof of its reality and the credibility with which it is regarded. His words are these: — "Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events

that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed." (NRSV)

Here we see the object of the author is not to write a history of the times, but only to relate a statement of events in them to bear out *a belief* in that in which Theophilus and others also had been instructed; and then, in point of fact, there follows a relation of incidents, although these are in the main positively contradicted by the historian of the period, who writes, not in support of any particular theoretic belief in which his readers had been instructed, but to portray such an image of the time as would be true of it to the end of the world.

Each writer has his own particular design; Luke's and that of the many who likewise retold the stories, being to historically vindicate a given creed, whereas Josephus' was to chronicle, from the best authorities, in the interest of no sect, the political and religious aspects of his own times and those of his father. Thus it happens we have before us, from his pen, a narrative such as will bear out the view we take of the case, commencing with the time of Pontius Pilate, and extending to the end of the war in the fall of Jerusalem; and the reader will notice how close an agreement there is as to general statements between his relation of events and that of the compilers of the Christian narratives, despite the too obvious discrepancies between them otherwise in historical detail and the philosophy of religion.

To confirm this theory of the case, we must quote extensively both from the Apostolic writings and from those of Josephus; and we will begin with the latter: — In

Book xviii of the Antiquities, cap. 4, § 1, he says: — “But the nation of the Samaritans did not escape without tumults. *The man* who excited them to it was one who thought lying a thing of little consequence, and who contrived everything so that the multitude might be pleased. So he bade them get together upon Mount Gerizim, which is by them looked upon as the most holy of all mountains, and assured them, that when they were come thither, he would show them those sacred vessels which were laid under that place, because Moses put them there. So they came thither armed, and thought the discourse of the man probable; and as they abode at a certain village, which was called Tirathaba, they got the rest together to them, and desired to go up the mountain in a great multitude together. But Pilate prevented their going up by seizing upon the roads with a great band of horsemen and footmen, who fell upon those that were gotten together in the village; and when it came to an action, some of them they slew, and others of them they put to flight, and took a great many alive, the principal of whom, and also the most potent of those that fled away, Pilate ordered to be slain”

Then in Section 2 he adds: — “But when this tumult was appeased, the Samaritan senate sent an embassy to Vitellius, a man that had been consul, and who was now president of Syria, and accused Pilate of the murder of those that were killed; for that they did not go to Tirathaba in order to revolt from the Romans, but to escape the violence of Pilate. So Vitellius sent Marcellus, a friend of his, to take care of the affairs of Judea, and ordered Pilate to go to Rome to answer before the Emperor to the accusation of the Jews. So Pilate, when he had tamed ten years in Judea, made haste to Rome, and this in obedience to the orders of Vitellius, which he durst not contradict; but before he could get to Rome, Tiberius was dead.”

In this narrative we see that Josephus partly agrees with and partly differs from the Evangelical accounts, for he represents Pilate as having involved himself in trouble in consequence of causing the death of *a man* who was a mere religious fanatic and had no political designs, while he says nothing whatever about, and does not even name, the crucified king, whom, as alleged, thousands followed with their *hosannahs*, and who was celebrated throughout Judea for his startling oracles and his still more startling works; thus agreeing with the Apostles in charging Pilate with the murder of a prophet, but disagreeing with them in not identifying him with Jesus.

So, we are naturally tempted to ask: Is it reasonable to suppose for a single moment that Josephus would have omitted to record the doings or mention the name of Jesus, when he condescends to refer to this obscure individual, who, though he had many followers, cannot be compared with the founder of a religious sect, and one, too, endowed with such attributes as are claimed by and conceded to the founder of the Christian religion? And are we, by combining the Evangelical accounts with his, to conclude that there were two prophets slain by Pontius Pilate, one the great character whom they portray, of whom Josephus gives no account, and the other the one whom he alone mentions? Is it possible that, in the short period during which Pilate was procurator of Judea, *two characters* should have appeared who deluded the people — one who wrought wonders and established a new religious belief, the center of which was the divine sacredness of his own person, the other an insignificant fanatic, who established no new creed, and was celebrated for no deed of any note — and that both should have been slain by him, the death of the one calling forth no protest, whilst that of the other provoked an appeal to the Emperor? Is it conceivable that the accurate and truthful historian of the day should so distort the magnitude of events as to single out for remark this temporary figure, and say nothing at all of the

remarkable personage, the circumstances of whose miraculous career, according to the Evangelical accounts, from its commencement to its close, amazed his contemporaries into a new faith, which gave birth to a new life and a new fellowship in life, and took shape in visible communities called churches, and not only say nothing of him, but virtually deny, in the face of men alive, the living witnesses to his reality, that he ever existed, by express assertion that the only sect which originated in his day was that of Judas of Galilee?

If there were no other evidence that the Jesus of the Gospels was not slain by Pontius Pilate, that the Christian sect had no existence at the time these Gospels allege, that the miracles, therefore, on the faith of which this sect took its rise, are a mere fable, to an ingenuous mind one would think this silence of Josephus would appear amply sufficient. It is plain that in his day, much more when he actually set to write his *Histories*, the so-called Apostolic writings did not exist, and that the Christian religion and Church must have first taken shape only at a subsequent period. It will be our business by and by to render probable, if not to demonstrate, this proposition, that the Christian faith and the Christian documents were based upon events and characters as chronicled by Josephus himself, so disguised, however, and distorted by tradition, as, except under very careful analysis, to be hardly recognizable as identical.

The chronology of the Gospel and Apostolic writings cannot well be expected to be other than inaccurate. Considering the necessarily *traditional sources of information* from which they are derived, it is very natural to suppose that they should differ as they do in this particular from Josephus, as well as contradict each other; and indeed from their own statements it is obvious, for one thing, that the events narrated, if they occurred at all, must have done so at a later period than the date assigned to them. For instance, the death of John the

Baptist –literally, *the Baptizer* - is recorded as follows: — Matthew 14:1-13 — "At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus, and he said to his servants, 'This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been telling him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.' Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod, so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, 'give me the head of John Baptist here on a platter. The king was grieved yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother. His disciples came and took the body, and buried it, and then they went and told Jesus. Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns." (NRSV)

Now, as Herod married Herodias in the last two years of Pontius Pilate's procuratorship, it follows as a matter of course, according to this account, that John the Baptizer was *alive* within this period; and as it is further recorded that John was slain by Herod prior to the death of Jesus, it is plain that this is inconsistent with and subversive of the account the Evangelists give of the slaying of Jesus by Pontius Pilate, in addition to that of the false prophet, which authentic history records took place in the last year of his government.

Nor is it true, as is here asserted, that Herod married his brother Philip's wife, as witness the account of this incestuous affair given by Josephus. In *Antiquities*, Book

xviii cap. 5, § 1, he writes: — "About this time Aretas, the king of Arabia Petrea, and Herod had a quarrel on the account following: Herod the tetrarch had married the daughter of Aretas, and had lived with her a great while; but when he was once at Rome he lodged with Herod [*not Philip, as is related by the Apostolic writings*], who was his brother indeed, but not by the same mother; for this Herod was the son of the high-priest Simon's daughter. However, he fell in love with Herodias, this last Herod's wife, who was the daughter of Aristobulus, their brother, and the sister of Agrippa the Great. This man ventured to talk to her about a marriage between them; which address when she admitted, an agreement was made for her to change her habitation, and come to him as soon as he should return from Rome. One article of this marriage also was this, that he should divorce Aretas's daughter. So Antipas, when he had made this agreement, sailed to Rome; but when he had done there the business he went about, and was returned again, his wife having discovered the agreement he had made with Herodias, and having learned it before he had notice of her knowledge of the whole design, she desired him to send her to Macherus, which is a place on the borders of the dominions of Aretas and Herod, without informing him of any of her intentions. Accordingly Herod sent her thither, as thinking his wife had not perceived anything. Now she had sent a good while before to Macherus, which was subject to her father, and so all things necessary for her journey were made ready for her by the general of Aretas's army, and by that means she soon came into Arabia, under the conduct of the several generals, who carried her from one to another successively, and she soon came to her father, and told him of Herod's intentions. So Aretas made this the first occasion of his enmity between him and Herod, who had also some quarrel with him about their limits at the country of Gemalitis [*Modern Gamala.*] So they raised armies on both sides, and prepared for war, and sent their generals to fight instead of themselves; and when they

had joined battle, all Herod's army was destroyed by the treachery of some fugitives, though they were of the tetrarchy of Philip, joined with Herod's army. So Herod wrote about these affairs to Tiberius, who being very angry at the attempt made by Aretas, wrote to Vitellius to make war upon him, and either to take him alive and bring him to him in bonds, or *to kill him and send him his head*. This was the charge that Tiberius gave to the president of Syria."

Now it is related that Vitellius proceeded to obey these commands of Tiberius, but before he could put them in execution, the intelligence arrived in Jerusalem, where he was on a visit for four days, that "*Tiberius was dead*;" from which it is obvious that these events were contemporaneous with the dismissal of Pontius Pilate, whose retirement from the procuratorship of Judea by the orders of the same Vitellius took place at the same time, "*for before he reached Rome*," as we have already quoted, "*Tiberius was dead*." (37CE)

It is important for the reader to bear in mind that the differences between Aretas and Herod which culminated in war arose mainly from the discovery by the former of an intention on the part of the latter to divorce his wife, who was Aretas' daughter, which intention was carried into effect by Herod *in the last two years of Pontius Pilate's government, in the reign of Tiberius*. For if it be true that John the Baptizer was first placed in prison because he rebuked Herod for marrying his own brother's wife, and that he was afterwards beheaded out of revenge on the part of Herodias, this deed must have been committed in the last days of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate; and since, according to the same authorities, Jesus was not crucified until *after* this event, it will follow that the false prophet who was slain by Pilate during the last year of his administration, and whose murder led to his recall from the government of

Judea, was the very individual to whom Josephus, as mentioned above, refers, and *not Jesus*.

Here we wish the reader to remark, that the agreement, such as it is, for which we argue as existing between the writings of Josephus and those called the Gospels, extends to the incidents they record, and rarely, except in this instance, to the chronology. The several writers refer in common to the same events in such a way, we think, as to clear up and set at rest the doubts and suspicions, often expressed, that the story of the Gospel writers is entirely fabulous, and not based upon analogous incidents recorded in history.

It seems obvious that the relation of those incidents by the Evangelists is *not reliable as regards the chronology*, nor is it identical with that of Josephus as respects the characters of the persons described, their position in life, and other important particulars. Nevertheless, though there is not an exact agreement, there is a remarkable *coincidence*, as regards the incidents themselves, divested, however, of all superstitious, mythical, and other distortions, which too often not only disfigure, but absolutely conceal the truth from the eyes of readers. And so much is this the case, that no attempt has yet been made to eliminate from the false traditional accounts the historical basis; nor has it, as far as we know, ever occurred to any one that *the facts* are already recorded in the pages of authentic history. This inquiry, it would seem, has never been essayed, mainly for two reasons. On the one hand, there were those who objected to the credibility of the Gospel writings in a historical reference, contenting themselves with the argument that it was impossible they should be true, since, if they were, their statements would certainly be confirmed by historical proof, and that there were historians extant, of undoubted accuracy, who lived at the time and wrote of the period, and yet were wholly silent about the events in question (*the mysticist thesis*); and, on the other hand,

there were those who accepted the writings as superior to challenge, seeing they were divinely inspired, and to be accepted as such at the very threshold as a first article of belief (*the theological thesis*). Our view of the case is the first formal attempt that has been made to relate the traditional accounts to *authentic historical records*, and we are confident that the analogy we are about to indicate will strike not a few readers with some surprise, as its first discovery did ourselves.

The real history of Jerusalem and Judea generally has, from the time of Pontius Pilate downwards, remained a sealed book to the general public until a very recent period. The parallel events to which we refer have been known only to those who have made a special study of the period, but, so far as we know, not one of these has drawn attention to *the parallel* as of any historical significance; and unless we happened to have a theological bent as well, we would not be likely to note, or in any detailed degree, at least, trace *the analogies which run through the traditional and historical accounts*, and to recognize their identity. Not that scholarship is necessary to do the research or find the proof; one has only to read Josephus, and to study his pages with a judgment unbiased in favor of any hypothesis and a sincere desire to arrive at the truth. A parallel *does* exist, all ready at hand too; and it is open to anyone who can read, to determine the correspondence, even the radical identity, between the traditional accounts and Josephus, and *to be convinced that to the latter we must look to find the true historical basis of the former*.

Let us note here a few of the parallels to be met with which establish this identity. The historical account will be found to agree with the traditional in these aspects among others:—

1. They alike affirm the existence of a religious sect, which believed, first, in the immortality of the soul, and,

secondly, that rewards and punishments in a future existence are determined by a virtuous or vicious course in this life. Both represent this sect as practicing asceticism of a severe order, in renunciation of the pomp and vanities of the world, the rich sharing their wealth with the poor in one common brotherhood, as if they were one family, and calling themselves *the children of God*.

2. They both record the judicial death, under sentence of Pontius Pilate, of one who claimed to be a prophet of the Lord.

3. Both equally testify to the existence of one Jesus, who had under him a following of fishermen and poor people.

4. The Jesus, common to both, had friends and lieutenants in the persons of John and Simon; as also a body of followers who received the law from his lips, and made their living in his service.

5. This Jesus, common to both, was betrayed by one of his followers, and, when taken prisoner, deserted by all who before adhered to him.

6. According to both accounts this Jesus had seventy devoted followers, who travelled from city to city, in the one instance, to hear cases and give judgment, and in the other, to preach and heal diseases.

7. Both speak of Simon and John, his colleagues, as having been imprisoned and then released.

8. This Jesus, with his two fellow runners, John and Simon, is represented by both as at once a great upholder of the Law of Moses and a daring *innovator* on the accepted national faith.

9. In both Jesus is spoken of as a man possessed and beside himself.

10. In both he predicts the destruction of Jerusalem by the guilt of the people themselves.

11. Both mention the crucifixion of three persons at one time, and that, when taken down from the cross, the bodies were begged by one Joseph, who was a counselor, a rich and a just man.

12. The two accounts agree so far as to imply, if they do not both equally assert, the believed restoration to life of one of the three, and actually affirm the death of the other two.

13. Both refer to signs in the heavens visible to all, one of which was a certain particular star of woeful import.

14. In both we have accounts of one who falsely promised deliverance to his generation, and who would, he said, one day prevail by his power over the habitable earth.

15. The historical account refers to a commotion at Pentecost, when there was first a quaking felt, then a great noise heard, and then a voice as from a great multitude saying, "*Let us remove hence.*" The traditional accounts refer to a meeting together of disciples at Pentecost, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled "*the house where they were sitting.*"

There are other correspondences of a more or less striking character and significant import between the historical and traditional accounts which seem to refer to identical occurrences: In this Essay, we only break ground, and must content ourselves with pointing out to our readers only the more obvious coincidences.

Look for now at the close analogy there is between the actions and general asceticism of *Banus*, as already quoted from Josephus' *Autobiography*, and those of John the Baptizer. Evidently this *Banus* was not a disciple of the Christian religion, for Josephus associated with him for three years, and would have mentioned such a circumstance. However, since the chronology of the Evangelists necessarily is at fault, there is no reason to suppose that he is not the Baptizer of their accounts, but who here knows no Jesus, or any one supernaturally endowed as he was with miraculous powers and gifts. Indeed, so close is the parallel between the character and actions of these two men that they would be at once recognized as one but for the chronological gap.

We have a palpable blunder of the very same kind, for instance, in the Acts, in which Paul is represented as appealing to Caesar Augustus in the time of Festus' procuratorship, instead of Nero, who was then Emperor. And, indeed, it lay, as we have said, in the nature of the case — in the manner in which these accounts were transmitted — that the date should be distorted as well as the events exaggerated; only, unhappily, the distortion and exaggeration are such as to make it often impossible to recognize the parallel between the truth at the basis of the traditional narrative and the facts of history. And yet it is not too much to say that, if we would but leave aside from the Evangelical accounts their supernatural connotations and the matter of dates, the most literal and perfect agreement would begin to appear between their version and the strictly historical.

It is clear that *the destruction of Jerusalem had taken place before what happened as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles I: 6*. Hence we read there that just before the alleged ascension of Jesus, when his disciples came together, they asked their master, saying, "*Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?*" For this language certainly implies that Herod was no

longer king; that the kingdom had passed into alien hands; and that, in consequence, as the further account testifies, the belief was seriously entertained that the last days had come, when the restoration was to be expected.

In Acts 2: 5-18 we read: — "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying one to another, 'Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans; And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.' And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, 'What meaneth this? Others, mocking, said, 'These men are full of new wine.' But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." (KJV)

Here we see more than the chronology at fault; there is an utter breakdown of the supernatural itself, while the contemporary eye sees in the transaction only a scandal and an offence, a manifestation of mere brain-delirium:

For this is no ordinary prophet who assures his hearers that the last days are come. This is the man to whom it was promised that such infallibility would belong, that the things he might say and the deeds he might do on earth would be endorsed in heaven. And here, on the very first occasion on which we might expect the pledge to be respected, the promise turns out to be *delusive* and the supernatural gift to *fail*, the prophet being himself *misled*.

The latter days here announced have not only not come, but seem as remote as ever, the changes ahead looming as portentous to-day as in any bygone era.

The predictions of Simon Peter are accepted by many enthusiastic disciples and his character is revered by thousands who all know, except the self-deluded, how fallacious his declarations recorded after the event were worthy of credit. Anyhow, however it was with Peter, no sober person will believe that in this occurrence the words of Joel were fulfilled, and that the last days had come.

CHAPTER III

Birthdates confused

At this stage, we cannot help feeling and expressing again our sense of amazement for the disclosures we are about to make, for we are about to invade the sacred precincts of accepted history, and to rudely challenge the asseverations of a widely-believed divine report. We feel that in attempting to demonstrate the stupendous error under which the Christian world has for ages been deceived, we are assuming a bold posture. But our thesis is simply that the Apostolic writings, while not without an ascertainable basis in authentic history, are, because intended to fortify a certain religious interest, fraught with statements of a historical nature that are palpably and outrageously false.

In proof of this position let us call the reader's attention to the two accounts that are given in Matthew and Luke's Gospels respectively of the birth of Christ.

In Matthew 2, we read: — “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying. Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said,

Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo! the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying. Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was

afraid to go thither; notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." (KJV)

Here we have a story *prima facie* of a very fabulous turn, and one not only unauthenticated by the strictly historical narrative of the period, but of which not even a trace or feature is to be found in any of the other traditional accounts. It is substantially this: That the moment of the birth of Jesus was announced by *a star* to wise men from the East; that by their report of the event not only was Herod troubled, but all Jerusalem along with him; that Herod, to compass the child's death, slew all the innocents about Bethlehem; that the parents of the child, being divinely warned of this, fled with him to Egypt; and that they remained there till Herod's death, and did not return till the accession of Archelaus, his son. Now in this account we first of all have announcements made regarding the child, and then prophecies applied to him which were never fulfilled. He never was king of the Jews; never ruled over Israel; and never, as the angel Gabriel in Luke's account promised, ascended the throne of his father David. And not only was this prophecy never fulfilled, but there is evidence within the traditional accounts themselves to show that Herod's sentence was never executed; for had it been, as is here alleged, John the Baptizer, who was in the district, and the senior of Jesus by only a few months, would have been among the number of the slain innocents.

The truth is, that not only are these statements inconsistent with fact, and stultified by non-fulfilment; but we have Luke's version to show that, notwithstanding the important services alleged to have been rendered by *the star*, the infant Jesus had not at that time seen the light, and that the whole second chapter of Matthew is as fabulous as the first, in which the author gives a

genealogy of Jesus to prove the fulfilment in him of the biblical prophecy that the Messiah was to be born of David, while, after adducing the proof of this to the satisfaction of all Christians, he at the same time, and nearly with the same breath, gravely assures his readers that Jesus had no genealogy at all, but, being born of the Spirit, was without an earthly father.

In Luke 2: 1-7 we read: — "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David): to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn:" (KJV)

This is a very different version from that of Matthew. Here is no gold, frankincense, or myrrh, however acceptable these might have been in the circumstances, — though one could have wished, for the credit of humanity, that the story had told us how some fellow-sojourner in the inn had had pity and exchanged places with the mother and her baby; but we have angels instead in multitudes, announcing the event to a company of shepherds, "*keeping watch over their flocks by night*," who accordingly, we are told, were the first to discover and make known to others the birth of the child.

That Luke's, and not Matthew's, is the correct version in this case is rendered more probable, from his reference, by way of date, to what is altogether missing in

Matthew's narrative. A tax is always levied by decree, and record kept in the public archives of the date. Without a decree and its publication it would not be lawful to collect it. Now a decree to this effect, with the date of its issue, exists on record, and by it we can verify the period to which Luke's narrative points. Accordingly it so happens, as has been shown by accurate historical research, that the Cyrenian taxation, and, according to Luke, the birth of Christ, took place, not, as Matthew's narrative implies, in the days of Herod, but after the banishment to Gaul by Caesar Augustus of Archelaus, Herod's son and successor, who had already ruled some time as king, and then for ten years more as ethnarch; so that it is no wonder that the shepherds could not be directed to *the star* that guided the wise men of the East, although it came and stood over where the young child was, for already *thirteen years had elapsed* since the appearance of that notable portent. Neither could they judge from the gold, frankincense, and myrrh that had been offered; they were guided by an angel to a certain inn, where they would find the child wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger. The shepherds could not meet the wise men of the East nor the wise men of the East the shepherds, although both, as is alleged, were supernaturally led by divinely-sent infallible ministers, and both had been bound upon the exact same errand — the worship of the young child who was to bring glory to Israel and peace to the world. Stars and star-gazers, however, have often deluded people, whereas angels and a host of angels have never; and so, of the two, if we must choose, we are inclined to give credibility to Luke's version, the more so that Luke, with some sense of and regard for historical truth, supplies particulars, and mentions not only the period and the region, but the very spot of the occurrence. And if so, what then becomes of the story of the massacre of the innocents in the last days of Herod, when the date Luke gives refers the birth of Jesus to *about thirteen years later* than the reign of that tyrant? What becomes of the

mysterious *star* which in his time beckoned the wonder-struck Magi out of Persia until it stood over the place where the child lay? And what an anachronism it is to run back the Christian era to the last years of Herod's reign!

In proof that Archelaus reigned as king and ethnarch before the date of the Cyrenian taxation, we call the reader's attention to the following details. By the last testament of Herod, Archelaus, his son, was appointed his successor in the kingdom, and Caesar Augustus was not only nominated the administrator of that instrument, but had the power conferred upon him by the testator of modifying and confirming its provisions. Archelaus succeeded his father in the year one of our common era (1CE), and commenced his reign with an honest desire to commend his rule to the good-will and favor of his subjects. Before long, however — it is not known how long — disaffection arose, and the Jews, or the chief sect of them (the Pharisees,) *appealed to Caesar* against him, "When," to use the words of Josephus, "Caesar had heard these pleadings, he dissolved the assembly;" but a few days afterwards, he appointed Archelaus, not indeed to be king of the whole country, but ethnarch of one-half of that which had been subject to Herod. In his *Jewish Antiquities*, Book xv chap. 12, § 2, Josephus continues: — "But in the tenth year of Archelaus's government, both his brethren, and the principal men of Judea and Samaria, not being able to bear his barbarous and tyrannical usage of them, accused him before Caesar, and that especially because they knew he had broken the commands of Caesar, which obliged him to behave himself with moderation among them. Whereupon Caesar, when he heard it, was very angry, and called for Archelaus's steward, who took care of his affairs at Rome, whose name was Archelaus also, and thinking it beneath him to write to Archelaus, he bade him sail away as soon as possible, and bring him to Rome; so the man made haste in his voyage, and when he came into Judea, he found Archelaus feasting his friends, so he told him what

Caesar had sent him about, and hastened him away. And when he was come [to Rome], Caesar, upon hearing what certain accusers of his had to say, and what reply he could make, both banished him, and appointed *Vienna*, a city of Gaul, to be the place of his habitation, and took his money away from him."

After all these events, *many years subsequent to the death of Herod*, Caesar appoints Cyrenius to make a taxation of Syria and Judea, and we arrive at the time when "Joseph, Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child, went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth unto the city of David, and the days were accomplished that she should be delivered of her child." (KJV)

The historian explains the appointment of Cyrenius as follows: — In Book xviii chap, 1, § 1, we read — "Now Cyrenius, a Roman senator, and one who had gone through other magistracies, and had passed through them till he had been consul, and one who on other accounts was of great dignity, came at this time into Syria, with a few others, being sent by Caesar to be a judge of that nation, and to take an account of their substance. Coponius, also, a man of the equestrian order, was sent together with him to have the supreme power over the Jews. Moreover, Cyrenius came himself into Judea, which was now added to the province of Syria, to take an account of their substance, and *to dispose of Archelaus's money*; but the Jews, although at the beginning they took the report of a taxation heinously, yet did they leave off any further opposition to it, by the persuasion of Joazar, who was the son of Boethus, and high-priest. So they, being over-persuaded by Joazar's words, gave an account of their estates without any dispute about it; yet there was *one Judas a Gaulonite of a city whose name was Gamala*, who taking with him Sadduc, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt, who both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty; as

if they could procure them happiness and security for what they possessed, and an assured enjoyment of a still greater good, which was that of the honor and glory they would thereby acquire for magnanimity. They also said that God would not otherwise be assisting to them than upon their joining with one another in such counsels as might be successful and for their own advantage, and this especially if they would set about great exploits, and not grow weary in executing the same. So men received what they said with pleasure, and this bold attempt proceeded to a great height. All sorts of misfortunes also sprang from these men, and *the nation was infected with this doctrine to an incredible degree*. One violent war came upon us after another, and we lost our friends who used to alleviate our pain; there were also very great robberies and murders of our principal men. This was done in pretense indeed for the public welfare, but in reality from the hopes of gain to themselves; whence arose seditions, and from them murders of men, which sometimes fell on those of their own people (by the madness of these men towards one another, while their desire was that none of the adverse party might be left), and sometimes on their enemies. A famine also coming upon us reduced us to the last degree of despair, as did also the taking and demolishing of cities; nay, the sedition at last increased so high, that the very Temple of God was burnt down by their enemies' fire. Such were the consequences of this, that the customs of our fathers were altered, and such a change was made as added a mighty weight toward bringing all to destruction, which these men occasioned by thus conspiring together; *for Judas and Sadduc, who excited a fourth philosophic sect among us, and had a great many followers therein*, filled our civil government with tumults at present, and laid the foundations of our future miseries by this system of philosophy, which we were before unacquainted withal; concerning which I shall discourse a little, and this the rather because the infection which spread thence among the younger sort,

who were zealous for it, brought the public to destruction."

It thus appears, on the unquestionable authority of Josephus, that the fourth sect of philosophy mentioned by him as founded by Judas of Galilee took its rise at the time and because of the Cyrenian taxation, and we have just seen that Luke assigns to that same period the date of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. If the date assigned by Luke for the birth of Jesus be correct, it will make Jesus to have been about twenty years or less of age when Pilate slew the false prophet of whom mention is made in the pages of Josephus, an event which happened in the year 33 CE.

This new sect sprang into existence before or about the time when, according to Luke, Jesus was born, when the seed which ripened in the ruin of the Jewish state (70CE) had been already sown and had taken root in the community. That the movement thus originated assumed eventually, under modifications in its spirit and aims, the name of *Christianity* (from the Greek *χριστος*, anointed or Messiah), there is no reason to doubt. It was, as the historical accounts testify, a doctrine which, when it was first introduced, was strongly blended with the politics of the day, had throughout a political significance, and tended rather to subvert than strengthen the Roman authority in Judea. The changed attitude this sect assumed towards Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem, by acknowledging in a general way its supremacy, could not fail to obtain for it respect in place of the hatred that was entertained against it, and to be received with all favor as its first initiation had grown out of a general patriotic feeling of the Judean population against the Roman usurper and their illegitimate Herodian kinglets (see *Le Mensonge Chrétien* by Arthur Heulhard, 1908-1910, for a full development of this thesis.)

The explanation of the philosophy of this sect, as described by Josephus, we have given in another place. This description must be received as a historical summary of the original philosophical creed and political bearings of the Christian sect and it follows that Jesus would have been only twenty years old if he was crucified by Pilate, whereas the traditional accounts make him to have been thirty-three; and if he was crucified by Pilate, it follows that there were two conspicuous characters who, during the last years of his procuratorship, fell victims to their religious zeal, of whom authentic history mentions only the one, while the Evangelical reports mention only the other.

According to Josephus, this sect had already an existence at the time Luke alleges Jesus was born, and its tenets were professed by multitudes before he opened his lips to speak, or had even the right to teach. And this is the sect which we venture to assert eventually developed into Christianity, and which, in the course of its development, when there was more of the Judas than the Christian element in its creed, brought about such seditions and tumults as to divide the Jewish people into opposite factions, at internecine feud with each other, and to strengthen the section that could not brook Roman domination, but regarded it as a curse that would one day bring down on the nation the vengeance of Heaven. However much the rest of the people might receive Augustus, Tiberius, or Caligula as deities, each—for it was virtually that, they thought—as a man-god, the Jews as a body preferred to suffer death and dispersion rather than submit to such a degradation and desecration; and all those who have studied the history of the period will allow that they had too good a reason to rebel, considering the rapacity of the Roman procurators of Judea, who vied with each other in their criminal acts of cruelty and oppression. And, indeed, the strife that went on then was the source of an age-long strife; for here we are, after twenty centuries of confusion and debate,

arrayed under the same antagonisms that developed then, the Jewish section uncompromisingly repudiating, and the Christian as uncompromisingly maintaining, the worship of a man as God. The modern antithesis between Jew and Christian is radically the same as that which existed of old between the Jewish Establishment and the riotous Galileans.

Let us repeat: The religious delusions which at this time prevailed and spread everywhere, tending to the disintegration of the Jewish state, contributed to intensify the hatred to the domination of the Roman authority, and stir up a determination to overthrow it and cast off its yoke, while the conservative element became gradually weaker and less able to stem the rising tide of lawless violence and vice. And as the Roman procurators, instead of upholding the cause of justice and order, winked at these proceedings, especially when by such connivance they might promote their own fortune, that government appeared to many more a curse than a blessing, and its removal a dire necessity laid on every Judean who loved their land and their religion.

Josephus relates in *Wars of the Jews*, Book ii cap. 13, §§3, 4:— "When the country was purged of these, there sprang up another sort of robbers in Jerusalem, which were called Sicarii, who slew men in the daytime and in the midst of the city. This they did chiefly at the festivals, when they mingled themselves among the multitude, and concealed daggers under their garments, with which they stabbed those that were their enemies; and when any fell down dead, the murderers became a part of those that had indignation against them; by which means they appeared persons of such reputation that they could by no means be discovered. The first man who was slain by them was *Jonathan the high-priest*, after whose death many were slain every day; while the fear men were in of being so served was more afflicting than the calamity itself, and while everybody expected death every hour, as

men do in war; so men were obliged to look before them, and to take notice of their enemies at a great distance; nor, if their friends were coming to them, durst they trust them any longer; but, in the midst of their suspicions and guarding of themselves, they were slain. Such was the celerity of the plotters against them, and so cunning was their contrivance.

"There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intentions, who laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers. These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them *into the wilderness*, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty; but Felix thought this procedure was to be the beginning of a revolt, so he sent some horsemen and footmen, both armed, who destroyed a great number of them."

The account by Josephus of the appearance at this juncture, and the political influence, of men who deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, is a notable historical admission, and reveals a condition of things calculated to prepare the mind to receive with less astonishment the Apostolic relation. That the enthusiasm connected with such a state of things should increase and give birth to others was natural under the complicated circumstances and the prodigies which accompanied them. And, accordingly, history records the fanatical excesses that followed, and denounces as deceivers those who, affecting a zealous reverence for liberty, forbade their followers to acknowledge any other authority than *the kingdom of God*, and excluded all human authority except that of their own sacerdotal order. The recent resurgence of religious fundamentalisms in our modern

world help us understand the dimension of the fanaticism that engulfed Palestine at that time.

CHAPTER IV

Four unknown Greek Writers

To the Greeks alone belongs the distinction of having first published to the world the several versions accepted by Christians of the life of the founder of their religion (although some scholars have argued that parts as Matthew were written in Hebrew and other segments in Aramaic.) What is noteworthy, though, is that they were the only people who, before these writings were produced, were cognizant of the works of Josephus. No others could read these works, for they were written in Greek; and they relate, as we have said, all that happened in the so-called *Messianic age*, from the time of Herod the Great to the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, and later. In no other tongue are earlier versions of these Gospels to be met with, and these were first presented to the Hellenized Roman Empire world in Greek, and not to the Jewish world in Hebrew or Aramaic. The story of the incidents recorded in the Gospel history was confessedly imported from the land of their occurrence to a foreign land, and it first saw the light under the guise of a foreign language. The historical groundwork of this story, as we inferred, is to be found in the writings of Josephus.

That historian's account of the incidents very closely agrees with theirs, only they have brought within a short space of time a variety of events which he refers to as having happened over a more extended period, and as matters of history rather than as facts in illustration of a peculiar philosophy. If no other land produced the Gospel writings, it is because no other land had at that time the writings of Josephus. If the Greeks had been as ignorant as the rest of the world of these writings, they would not, and could not, have composed the four Gospels. As it is, the Apostolic books are grounded partly on traditional reports and partly on historical statements found in

Josephus; only the traditional element has overborne and obscured the historical, and has no doubt caused the statements of these books to be conflicting and contradictory. And they are so conflicting and so contradictory that, as has been often remarked, one author not only disagrees with another, but each separate account is full of inconsistencies.

No writings, save and except those of the Hebrew Bible, have ever made such an impression upon the Western world as these have; and yet no writings contradict the Bible more, while they at the same time affect to be its fulfilment and confirmation. They bear testimony in words to the truth of the Bible, while they advance a philosophy which is quite different from it. That such should be the case, however, is not surprising when we consider that the authors of the second "*Testament*" were obscure, at any rate unknown, personages, who were probably Greeks by birth as well as Greeks by language, and that the scenes of their narrative lay not in Greece but in the land of Judea. The story they tell was composed of elements which came to them through the distorting medium of traditional reports and sustains a philosophy born of the political situation of a foreign country at odds with the Greco-Roman culture.

As we have seen, the historian of Judea mentions the existence among the Jews of his day of a class of men who stirred up the people against their rulers on the pretense of a commission from the Almighty — mere worthless impostors, who deluded and carried away multitudes, more particularly of the younger and more fiery spirits of the nation. They professed to be animated by a greater reverence than others for God, a holier zeal for the law, and a more genuine patriotism; and all pointed to some great biblical prophecy about *the latter days* as either fulfilled or on the eve of fulfilment, and that in circumstances favorable to foster and promote the work of the deceiver.

For everything conspired to favor the delusion imposed upon the age that preceded the period referred to in the Apostolic writings: *The religion of Judas of Galilee was embraced by multitudes*. The enthusiasm with which *this fourth sect* was accepted was based on appeals to the patriotism of the people, and this was wrought upon by certain political schemers to compass their own ambitious designs. Nor were the arguments with which these crafty men plied the mob of the day without foundation. The theocracy of the Jews, as established by Moses, was, it was alleged, a purely divine institution, and the establishment of a merely human authority within it was regarded as an innovation (Josephus' term,) which amounted to its subversion. A *kingdom of God* upheld only by sacerdotal authority was indeed the Mosaic ideal, and this Mosaic institution underwent a change when a king was chosen (King Saul) and appointed to rule instead of the priesthood, Moses being simply the mouthpiece and minister of this divine order. The philosophy of Judas of Galilee, which reverted to this original idea of the Jewish state as a pure theocracy, could not fail to find among the followers of Moses sincere adherents, and it soon took practical shape in a combined determination to shake off the yoke of Roman domination and authority. And the Roman procurators of Judea, by their rapacity and criminal injustice, did what they could to encourage popular revolt and render the public mind a prey to superstitious delusions. A *king of righteousness*, of the seed of David, it was proclaimed, was coming to reign over the habitable earth, and all mankind should one day bow before his sovereign authority. All the nations of the earth were about, as predicted, to acknowledge the one true God, and the Jewish people must now, if never before, stand true to their sacred destination, and sternly refuse homage to an earthly lord (the Roman overlord), still more a foreign despot (the Illegitimate Herod family.)

It is this prophet, very apparently, whom the Apostolic accounts christen with the name of Jesus, and make the founder and author of a new religion, which they expound and allege to have been accepted by multitudes. Of this same person Josephus asserts that he was a deluder of the people and a false prophet, and he contradicts the assertion that he was the founder of a new religion by ascribing that honor exclusively to Judas of Galilee, who, as remarked, must have had a considerable following before the date of the birth of Jesus as given by Luke the Evangelist. So that if Luke's account, which ascribes the origin of one sect to Jesus, be as correct as that of Josephus, which ascribes another and prior sect to Judas, it follows, contrary to the express statement of the latter, that two new religions had been founded, and that both had originated in Galilee, which two religions were at the same time almost identical as regards dogma, each propagating a similar scheme of belief and practice, which culminated in one master-idea, that of *the kingdom of God* to be realized on earth as it is in heaven. For in these respects the teaching of Judas and the teaching of Jesus agree with each other and the original Messianic idea; only the expected Messiah, who was, under the providence of God, to appear on earth and rule, was, in Judas' eyes, to be *a king of righteousness* but *not a god*; whereas the Greek writers of a much later period, since called the Messianic, assert that the prophet who was slain was not only the Messiah, but the Son of God Himself; that he had lived on earth in Judea for some thirty-three years, and that the age and the district had been made famous both by the astounding miracles which he wrought himself and his followers in his name after him. They even give an account of signs and wonders, both on earth and in heaven, which accompanied his advent, and marked the period and place of his birth as notable before all other periods of history and places upon earth. Unlike the appearances of the Greek gods in the affairs of men, not his advent only, but his whole career was invested with a halo of divinity. A

present God was proclaimed from the Temple, from the tops of the mountains, from the seashore, from cities and villages, in sacred places and secular, before high and low, among all ranks and classes of the Palestine world. At least so do four unknown Greek writers in an after age assert; and had they not done so— for Josephus says nothing of it, or any other contemporary — the world would to this hour have been equally ignorant of God's visit to earth and of the form in which He presented Himself to the eyes of mortals.

These four Greek writers, along with another — Paul — who received a special visit from Jesus after he left the earth, are good enough to inform the world not only of all the particulars of his visit, but of the place it held and the purpose it fulfilled in the divine economy. God made a covenant with His Son to visit the earth in the form of man on a benevolent enterprise. To save mankind from perdition, it was necessary to break the power of the devil, and in order to achieve this purpose, and defeat and destroy the adversary, it was also necessary that God should assume man's nature and die in man's stead. God, being eternal, could not die, but He came in the human person of Jesus, who, it is alleged, founded this new religion; which yet can be historically proved to have existed before he saw the light. But these writers knew better, it seems, what took place in Judea than did the inhabitants of Judea at the time themselves; and yet there is nothing to show how they were better informed, except we assume that the very events occurred of which contemporary witnesses are altogether silent. These four Greek writers, however, it would appear, had some private and peculiar sources of information not accessible to the rest of the world. They knew what the devil said to Jesus and what Jesus said to the devil; what took place in secret between the high-priest and the Roman soldiers, — how the latter had been bribed by the former to say that the body of Jesus was taken away by his friends, to deceive the public into a belief that he had not risen, as if

such a trick could not have been exposed at once by the reappearance of Jesus alive again in the midst of his enemies.; for it is not said that the high-priests had intimation that Jesus would after his resurrection hide himself from the public view, and only show himself again to a few Galileans. If these four Greek writers speak the truth, Josephus must have concealed from the world a multitude of events of which his very contemporaries were aware, and which his parents and their contemporaries actually witnessed. Josephus condemns the philosophy which has its apparent outcome in Christianity as propounded by Judas of Galilee, pronouncing it a madness, since it led to issues which were to be absolutely deplored, and gave rise to a delusion that provoked the multitude of the Jews to an insurrection which caused the destruction of the Temple and their city. No just reason can be given for his calling the founder of that philosophy Judas instead of Jesus, if he was not Judas. Can he be accused of having intentionally altered the name, or did he mistake the one for the other? If he committed such a mistake, had he not the power to rectify it? Was such a mistake likely to be made by him in the face of the Christian community, even that of Rome? Could he have committed it, had the Christian religion existed then, with its thousands of witnesses, to attest that not Judas but Jesus was the author of their faith? Could Christianity have had then any existence? Would not those who wrote at a subsequent period, when the living witnesses of the events were all dead, be more liable to commit this error? Either they or Josephus, therefore, misstate the facts. It is for the reader to judge whether they who were foreigners, and lived after the events, or he who was a native of the scene of them, and all but contemporary, was most likely to be in error. History is not history, if it be not true; and if it be not history, it is fable; and if fable, let it be treated as such.

CHAPTER V

The Gospel Script

The ordinary rules of evidence should not be set aside because the interests involved are of the highest importance. Not the less reason is there in that case, but the more, why the related statements should be put to the test, especially when it is in our power to correct mere hearsay accounts by contemporary ones. The four Greek authors themselves ought to have known that they had departed in their statements from the current reports, and the motive, aim, and end of such contradictions should be given by them. It was their duty, also, to refer to such previous accounts, and to combat those statements to which they take exception.

Yet they never even once refer to Josephus, whose History, embracing the self-same Messianic period as theirs, was already published in the Greek tongue, and must have been well known both to the educated Greeks and the dispersed Judeans in the Roman Empire. They refer to a multitude of events reported by him but record them in such disorder as regards date that no two of the narratives correspond together. Indeed, it is not necessary to compare their writings with those of Josephus in order to prove them false, for each, as we insist, not only contradicts another, but each makes statements that are self-contradictory. The dramatic narrative composed by these writers, each more or less in his own way, though it embraces much that is historically true, is extensively blended with sheer fiction; to such an unprecedented extent, that the Christian Apologists found it necessary to invent for the proceeding a new name, and call it *vicarious statement*; that is to say, a statement which, as a general rule, is not to be seriously accepted as truth, but only used in the way of argument for the defense of the Gospel and its peculiar theories. And indeed the Christian

Apologist is apt to grasp at any weapon by which he can repel attack, so that what is sometimes regarded as vicarious is at other times relied upon as literally true, and the alternations, significant as they are, pass unnoticed by many, who are too much overawed by the drama itself to note any inconsistency in the details of it.

It must be conceded that the four Greek writers did not originate the plot of their story, but they altered its incidents very materially, and so shortened the intervening periods as to render their chronology entirely anomalous. The material for the plot was most ample; it was coextensive with the scheme sketched in the Hebrew Bible; only the new composition took liberties, for it introduced elements that were not only discordant therewith, but contradictory. Josephus could have had no object in misstating the facts of history; he does not pretend to be the founder of a new philosophy; he is not even a fanatical adherent of the old; he is of no philosophy except that which loves, seeks, and speaks truth. The four Greek writers are desirous, even zealous, to found a new sect, with a new philosophy, in support of which they avowedly write their histories. Josephus writes to record facts, not in their bearing on any system, but simply as unprejudiced, unimpassioned statements of actualities. The four Greek writers are wedded to a superstitious belief, and bigotedly intolerant of every other. Josephus could only succeed as a historian, and obtain acceptance for his work, by being dispassionately truthful and impartial. There would have been thousands to accuse him had he written falsehood, and he never would have had the reputation which has come down to our day as the most reliable of all historians. There is this, we allow, to be said in behalf of the four Greek writers: their primary object was not to maintain the dignity of history, but to establish and obtain acceptance for an alleged realized life-philosophy; their primary interest was religious, and not scientific. Hence the penalty with which they threaten those who do not adopt

their view of things and the high award they hold out to those who accept their doctrine.

The gospel they preached may be summed up in three propositions: — 1. That biblical prophecy had been fulfilled by the actual advent of the latter days. 2. That the Messiah who was to usher in the latter days had actually come. 3. That this Messiah was none other than Almighty God Himself in human form.

As Jesus had revealed himself, not only as Messiah, but as God Almighty, he had, by dying and rising again as immortal, transferred the seat of the house from the Jerusalem on earth to the Jerusalem in heaven. David's line had culminated in deity, and henceforth that line rules the earth from the throne of eternity, and the world's God is of David's issue and David's dynasty. The Greek writers fortify their statements about the transfer of the throne of David from earth to heaven by quotations from the prophets, which, they aver, have this reference; others, not aware of this reference, simply record the events which they knew had befallen this kingdom of David, but say nothing about its translation to heaven.

Josephus furnishes his readers with very full particulars of the destruction of the old Jerusalem, and thus of its ancient throne; and one of the four Greek writers (John) has a minute account to give of a New Jerusalem, more glorious and abiding. The one account cannot be contradicted, because it has been realized; the other cannot, because it has not. One thing is evident, that the idea of the New Jerusalem did not arise till after the destruction of the old one; otherwise it would have been designated another or a second, not a New Jerusalem. And to bear out this view it is enough to remark that the kingdom of Israel first fell to pieces with the fall of the City and the ruin of the Temple. The question is alleged to have been put to Jesus by his Apostles, when would he restore the kingdom to Israel? Such a question could not

have been put into their lips except in retrospect of the downfall of the city in 70CE.

CHAPTER VI

From Judas to Jesus

The four Greek writers do not agree as to the names and persons of the Apostles. In Luke's Gospel and the Acts we have one Thaddeus, whereas the other Gospels mention instead an Apostle of the name of Judas, distinct from Judas Iscariot. According to two of the accounts, this Judas is the brother of James, and all four writers mention the two James. One of these is represented to be the brother of John, while the other, according to the two authorities mentioned, is the brother of Judas. These two James, the brother of John and the other who is designated by Paul James the brother of the Lord, are both alleged to have been killed by the authorities in Jerusalem.

But what we especially desire to bring before the reader's attention is the fact of this last being called *the Lord's brother*. The reason given by some for this designation is very unsatisfactory. It is alleged by them that the expression does not imply that he was a blood-relation, but only that he was a brother in the faith, as one of the Apostles. If so, it is difficult to understand why he should be so signalized when the rest of the Apostles are identified under mere natural relationships, one as the brother of John and another as the brother of Simon Peter. It is natural, therefore, to conclude, that as the designation was used literally in regard to them, it was so used also in regard to him. The difficulty is further enhanced by additional particulars which are supplied us by Paul and John. Paul thus writes to the Galatians, chap. 1: 18-20: — "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles saw I none save James, the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." (KJV)

There being two of the same name among the Apostles, it was necessary to distinguish one from the other; and how is this done? By identifying one of them as *James the Lord's brother*. It could not be because he was an Apostle that he was accounted the Lord's brother, but because he was literally a blood-relation. No other conclusion can be reasonably drawn from the language; and as the fact is vouched for by Paul on oath, it should be accepted as authentic, at least by those who have faith in him as a reliable authority. Fourteen years after this visit to Peter, Paul again went up to the Jerusalem, where, as he says, he a second time met the same Apostle, along with others. But let us read his own account, to see how, by the comparison of it with that of John, the Greek writers are in this matter at variance with him no less than with one another. Paul states, Galatians 2: 8, 9: — "For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles: and when James, Cephas, and John who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." (KJV)

Hear what John says, chap. 1: 35-42: — "Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith. Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them. What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou? He saith unto them. Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him. We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. . . . And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son

of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone.” (KJV)

Here the reader will remark it is alleged that Simon Peter and his brother Andrew were originally disciples of John the Baptizer, who is the cousin of Jesus, but who affects not to know him except as the "*Lamb of God*" as though he knew him only in his heavenly and not at all in his earthly relationship. These disciples leave the service of John the Baptizer to become the Apostles of Jesus, while Jesus is seemingly unaware of their ever having been the Apostles of John, or of his ever having pointed him out to them as being *the Lamb of God*. How men can boast of their being eye-witnesses, and yet not be accurate as to whose Apostles they were?

According to John's narrative, Jesus, without being publicly told, knows at once the name of Simon, and says, "Thou shalt be called Cephas." Now, though there is no mention here of the name of Peter, there is no doubt, from the relationship given, that Peter is meant, and that he is here called Cephas; and yet this Cephas is unaccountably sundered from the person of Peter, and the two names become by and by the names of two separate persons; for Paul, as we have seen, testifies that James, Cephas, and John (the same John who testifies that Cephas is Simon), were all seen by him in the flesh as distinct personalities, and "gave him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship." Here then is one of the Evangelists furnishing an account which Paul declares upon his oath as an eye-witness to be false. We do not know to whom to award credibility in this case, with such an experience of their historical inaccuracy and with such estimates of their unreliability handed down to us by their contemporaries. As, however, Paul's statement is given on oath, and he speaks of the actual presence on the occasion referred to of John, Peter, and Cephas, we are forced into the belief that Peter and Cephas must have

been two separate individuals, and not, as in the account of John, two names for one and the same person.

In the course of our inquiries we find it impossible to pursue a direct line, in consequence of the confusion of contradictory statement which we everywhere encounter. Therefore, we are obliged at this stage to make what might seem a digression, and to quote from Matthew. In Matthew 16: 13- 17 we read: — "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said. Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father which is in heaven." (KJV) This last statement brings us face to face with a perfect network of inconsistencies. The revelation which is here declared, not to have been revealed by flesh and blood, is asserted by John the Evangelist to have been revealed to this very Simon and Andrew his brother by John the Baptizer who was literally the flesh-and-blood cousin of Jesus himself, while the account given above by Matthew of the first introduction of Andrew and Simon to Jesus implies that neither was introduced by the Baptizer, if they even were disciples of his at all. And not only do these two writers contradict each other in regard to the introduction of Peter to Jesus, and the manner of the revelation of the latter to the former, they are equally opposed in their statement of the occasion when the Cephas or rock-title was conferred. John says it was when John the Baptizer introduced him to the Messiah on the banks of the Jordan; Matthew that it was when the revelation was first made by God in heaven. So that it appears, and it is that it may appear we mention it, these documents are historically unreliable.

But it is another inquiry which in connection with this presses for answer. Why is James called both the Lord's brother and that of Judas? Can it be that Lord and Judas denote the same person? May we not surmise a connection between the Judas here and the Judas of Josephus? Whence then the change of name from Judas to Jesus? This it will be our business to explain in a subsequent chapter.

Meanwhile, remark how very imperfectly this whole subject has been investigated. Take, for instance, the criticism of the relationship which is said to have existed between Jesus and John the Baptizer. According to the Gospel accounts, they must have been mutually aware of their relationship to each other. Their respective mothers, the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth, had, it was known, both been visited by the Angel Gabriel, and intimations were supernaturally vouchsafed them of the great future in store for their offspring. It is incredible, after miraculous communications such as these, known, as they were, and recorded by the Apostles, companions of Jesus and John the Baptizer, that the knowledge of the fact was concealed from the two principals themselves. Yet Jesus speaks of his cousin John as the greatest of the prophets, and John extols the greatness of Jesus, while both hold such communication with each other as if neither was conscious of any fleshly relationship to the other, and the Apostles themselves seem to forget that they had spoken of any other connection. A possible clue to the circumstances of this relation we have seen referred to and explained by only two scholars, namely Arthur Heulhard in *Le Mensonge Chrétien* (op. cit.) and Robert Eisler in *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist According to Flavius Josephus* (1931)

It is out of our power, in a work so limited as this, to deal fully with this great subject as it deserves. The leading points we have sought to establish in the course of our argument are these: — That the only religious sect new

to Josephus and the Judea of his day was founded by Judas of Galilee; that James the Lord's brother was the brother of Judas; that Judas the Apostle (not Iscariot) is not represented as the brother of Jesus the Lord; that James is not spoken of as the brother of Jesus but is called the brother of the Lord and the brother of Judas only. And we conclude with asking if there is not in all this a presumption that the original name of the Lord of the traditional Gospels was, not Jesus, but Judas? This possibility was first enunciated by Emil Walter in *New Discoveries in Christianity* (1900.) May not the Gospels in this way bear witness to the fact? How the name Judas was changed into Jesus will appear in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER VII

Expecting the Messiah

Few persons, if any, competent to judge, will question the existence in history of a *Messianic age*. The first historian who records the fact is Josephus, who was a witness of its existence. It was contemporaneous with his own life and that of his immediate ancestors, and was limited in its manifestation to Judea, the land, of his birth; and it is he who has related the incidents which occurred in it, as well as the philosophic views and political agitations, with the errors and crimes, which characterized it. In it the first announcement was made to the world of an expectation, which extended far over the borders of Judea, of the advent of the *Messiah* in fulfilment of biblical prophecies. It was an age of portents and prodigies, of signs on earth and signs in heaven, and it coincided neither with the period of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate nor that of the reign of Tiberius.

For the insignificant individual who was slain by Pilate, and whose death and that of his followers led to his recall, was neither the founder of a new philosophy nor a pretender to the Messiahship, but simply an impostor. The age referred to commenced when the philosophy of Judas of Galilee began to circulate and find acceptance, partly among the simple-minded, partly among the political zealots and partly among the more restless spirits of the community; and when Caligula at length commanded his image to be set up in Judea and worshipped, then the idea of the *kingdom of God* as preached by Judas, with its renunciation of all merely human kingship, began violently to seize on the heart and sway the great mass of the people; only as the reign of Caligula was short-lived, and his successor, Claudius Caesar, commenced his government in a milder and less

exacting spirit (though he openly persecuted the Druidic religion in Gaul and Britain,) the revolt was for a time allayed and there was no open outburst.

The days of religious fanaticism, however, had set in, and another pretender to prophetic inspiration arose, who endeavored to delude the people. This was when Fadus was procurator of Judea, in the early days of Claudius Caesar (41CE.) This impostor was called Theudas: "He persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it." So Josephus reports (*Antiquities*, Book xx. cap. 5, § 1.)

Up to this moment no mention whatever is made of Jesus Christ: of him, if he existed previously, all his contemporaries are silent, and that though the names of many others are given who were pretenders to divine powers, or powers, at least, transcending such as are normal to humanity.

The procuratorship of Marcus Antonius Felix, which extended to the reign of Nero (52-58CE,) witnessed further attempts at innovation under the pretext of a Divine commission: "The works that were done by the robbers filled the city with all sorts of impiety. And now these impostors and deceivers persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God. And many that were prevailed on by them suffered the punishment of their folly; for Felix brought them back and then punished them. Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five

furlongs. He said further that he would show them from hence how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down, and he promised them that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down. Now, when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons; and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, and did not appear any more. And again the robbers stirred up the people to make war with the Romans, and said they ought not to obey them at all; and when any person would not comply with them, they set fire to their villages and plundered them." (*Antiquities*, Book xx. cap. 8, § 6)

Here, again, we have another pretender to divine powers of no great significance portrayed by the historian of the day, and still not one word of Jesus of Nazareth. The case referred to is one more instance of the existence and influence on the popular mind of the religion of Judas of Galilee, and the prevailing expectation of a Messiah, which tended to make men impatient of every other authority, and converted, at length, a community collected together under the name of religion into a gang of open robbers, who pillaged right and left from those who would not consent to go along with them in their revolutionary action. Why, it is natural to ask, are there accounts on the page of history of these inconsiderable fanatics, and no word of Jesus, who is traditionally represented as having so acted and spoken as to have impressed his disciples with the conviction that he was the co-equal of the Deity, the doer of many wonderful works, the founder of a new religion which was to swallow up and sweep away every other; who when alive brought the dead to life and stilled the turbulence of the sea; over whose person the heavens opened, and out of

which the astonished human ear heard God's own voice saying, "*This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*;" one on whom had fallen the mantle of Moses and Elijah, who descended from heaven to pay him homage and resign him their thrones? Of all this the pages of authentic history are silent, and that though this Jesus is said to have preached his doctrine from mountaintops to assembled multitudes, and fed his hungry followers by thousands, — not with *manna*, but with substantial bread and fish miraculously multiplied; and though there were numbers alive who had witnessed his death amid darkness on the cross, been with him after his resurrection from the dead, shared in the enthusiasm which followed his ascension to heaven, and wrought signs and wonders by faith in his name, as the prince of life to the world.

Festus succeeds Felix (58CE,) and a new impostor appears, but still no word of Jesus: "So Festus sent forces, both horsemen and footmen, to fall upon those that had been seduced by a certain impostor, who promised them deliverance and freedom from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as the wilderness. Accordingly those forces that were sent destroyed both him that had deluded them and those that were his followers also." (*Antiquities*, Book xx. cap. 8, § 10)

Pretenders to Messianic powers followed each other at this time in rapid succession, and deluded more or fewer by promises of deliverance by the right hand of God from the miseries the nation suffered under the Roman domination. Many of these pretenders, much as they, with their followers, suffered for their superstitious beliefs and proceedings, were themselves the victims of a delusion that was inspired by others, on whose shoulders, therefore, the responsibility lay.

Not till *a later period* does *a pretender of the name of Jesus* appear on record; for one of *this name* comes to light just as the Jewish state is falling to pieces, on the eve of the destruction of the city and Temple. He is preceded by that religious teacher whose reputation for piety, renunciation of all worldly ties and engagements, and insistence on *baptismal purification* are mentioned by Josephus, who, as we have seen, resided with him for three years, that is, *sixteen years subsequent to the recall of Pontius Pilate* (53CE.)

Now, if Luke's chronology be accepted, John the Baptizer would at this time be about thirty-six years old; and surely such a character as this could not already be forgotten. Or is it not more probable that *Banus* with whom Josephus was associated, and whose name, by the way, is derived from a word signifying "*to dip*," is really the identical person spoken of under the name of John in a subsequent age, of which we learn for the first time, from four Greek writers, that he, as *Baptizer*, lived at an earlier date precisely such a life as is here indicated historically by Josephus, who, however, is not aware of any other person as leading such an ascetic life?

Would Josephus have referred to this *Banus* as the head of a particular sect of Judaism, and yet be silent about John the Baptizer, had a different individual of that name and ascetic life previously existed? Would he not have referred to *Banus* as the follower or disciple of this John, whom, in the case assumed, he must have succeeded after an interval of only a year or two? Would *Banus* have become as famous as Josephus represents, if he had been born at a later date than that which the chronology of Luke assigns to the birth of John? It would require many years of private training and public manifestation before anyone could acquire such historical prominence as is assigned by Josephus to *Banus* in his autobiography; and we may well conclude, therefore, that the *Banus* of Josephus is the John of Evangelical tradition.

Considerations such as these tend to fix for us the correct chronology; and the fixing of this is an important point towards the establishment of the truth. The many incidents occurring at different periods both prior and subsequent to the procuratorship of Pilate should be most conscientiously studied by all lovers of historical truth; and history, which even Christianity regards as a most sacred domain, ought not so to be tampered with in the interest of any theology. And so far is the testimony of history from confirming the dates of the traditional accounts that we find, as we read the historic page that we have already finished the reigns of Tiberius (14-37CE,) Caligula (37-41CE,) and Claudius (41-54,) and advanced into the reign of Nero (54-68CE,) before we come upon *the name of Jesus*. Up to this period there is no mention whatever either of him or his religion, or the wonderful works on which, according to the Evangelists, he grounded his title to respect.

The Jewish religion was, as we have already seen, divided at this period into four sects, three of which were of more or less ancient date, and the new sect founded about the period of the Cyrenian taxation by Judas of Galilee (14CE.) This latter sect was an innovation on the old cult and introduced new forms; it was instinct with superstitious enthusiasm, and blended politics with the sacred rites of religion, having in view the breaking of the Roman yoke and the establishment, pure and simple, of *the kingdom of God*, whose administration was to be a sacerdotal one in the hands of the high-priest, who should rule the nation according to the laws of God.

But this Messianic ideal required the appearance of a Messiah - an anointed heir of David - whom the Greeks translated: *κρίστος*, from which is derived *Christ*-ian and pretenders to Messianic power in consequence followed each other in rapid succession, who promised the deliverance sought for to multitudes of dupes. The Roman authorities knew of the prevailing delusion, and

treated it as a political subterfuge to overthrow the Roman yoke. Pontius Pilate's recall from the procuratorship (37CE,) for killing, along with his followers, the pretended prophet of Samaria, whom we have so often referred to, was prompted by the conviction that the act was a political blunder, the Samaritan senate having satisfied the imperial authorities that there was no insurrectionary spirit or meaning in the attempt. The Roman world became familiar with the story of these transactions and the memory of them subsequently blended themselves, more or less transformed, in the traditional accounts that apply to Jesus.

Only let us note it was the expectation of a Messiah, and not the advent of one, which brought Palestine to destruction, and the true history of the period confirms this conclusion. It was this expectation that gave the zealots and demagogues such influence over the mass of the people.

CHAPTER VIII

The Historical Jesus

The procurator of Judea who preceded Gessius Florus (64-66CE,) during whose administration the war broke out, was Albinus (62-64CE.) He had no scruples to accept bribes from the Sicarii, before whose outrages neither life nor property was safe, and to wink at, if not profit by, their iniquitous spoliations. His complicity, however, was not generally known, and it was left to his successor, Gessius Florus, whose actions were as brutal as they were unjust, to arouse the passions and hostility of the people to a pitch which only bloodshed and destruction could quench.

There was discontent till then, and much injustice arising from the wicked complicity of Albinus, but no appeal to arms or open revolt. It was a period of portents and prodigies, as authentic history reports. The fate which shortly after befell the Temple, the city, and the people, was not as yet apprehended. The security of the nation was not threatened; comparative peace prevailed....

“Such was the state of feeling in the Commonwealth, when one day, of a sudden, at the Feast of Tabernacles in the Temple, a wild, fearful cry startled and appalled the congregation. It came from a plebeian or peasant, and its appeal was heard far and wide by the multitude. It proclaimed the impending desolation of the Temple and the city, and the dispersion of the people. It was such a presage as Holy Writ gives some idea of when a prophet comes forth at the command of God to denounce His anger against a wicked generation, and doom the city they inhabit to the vengeance of His wrath. This fearful cry repeated at every festival, and its shrill notes heard all over the city while the ceremonial lasted. It was a cry by day and by night, saying, *"A voice from the east, a voice*

from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people." (*Wars of the Jews*," Book vi. chap. 5, § 3)

This prophecy of destruction and desolation was the proclamation of the historical Jesus, the only Jesus recognized at the time as a prophet of the Lord by the people and it foretold what was coming on the city, the Temple, and the nation.

"This was his cry," continues Josephus, "as he went about by day and by night in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among, the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did not he either say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of *divine fury in the man*, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet did he not make any supplication for himself nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible at every stroke of the whip, his answer was, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem.' And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him who he was, and whence he came, and why he uttered such words, he made no manner of reply to what he said but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him for a *madman* and dismissed him. Now during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so, but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem.' Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of

his was the loudest at the festivals, and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for, as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, 'Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house;' and just as he added at the last, 'Woe, woe. to myself also!' there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages, he gave up the ghost."

This was the only Jesus known in Judea, or by the world at large, as having had at the period we speak of the slightest influence as a prophet upon the men of that generation. He was a man of transcendent meekness, cherishing no hatred to those who persecuted him, even though they seemed to thirst for his life. No reproaches even ever passed his lips; one passion only seemed to possess him, and that was to recall his countrymen to their ardent loyalty, by threat of the terrible woe that was coming upon them if they continued in their guilt. The very Temple would not be spared to them, their city was a doomed city, and the Jewish people were to endure a terrible curse, such as their own scriptures forewarned them would smite their apostate hearts.

This historical Jesus was fed, more or less, by the people, and he gave no thanks nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day.

This is the Jesus who prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the people, in accents enough to appall the most callous, with an earnestness and persistency of denunciation that is unparalleled in the annals of the world. He was brought before the Sanhedrin or Jewish authorities, at whose instance he received a great number of stripes; yet did not say anything for himself or anything peculiar "to those that chastised

him." It was after inflicting this punishment that the rulers (the Sanhedrin), supposing, as proved to be the case, that there was a sort of *divine fury in the man*, brought him to the Roman procurator, yet he did not make any supplication for himself. He was not killed, but his bones were laid bare; and he was in such a plight that he was not for some time thereafter anywhere to be seen; for, now, says Josephus, "*during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens nor was seen by them.*" It was not unreasonable to surmise, as he disappeared after this torture, that he was dead, and so *his reappearance* might naturally come to be spoken of as a resurrection. "He rambled about the country, visiting every city, and in his fits of transport uttered the same terrible prediction, straining his voice to the utmost pitch, yet not enfeebling it: When the war broke out, he went on with the same enthusiasm proclaiming vengeance and with crowds of his countrymen returned to Jerusalem" (Bossuet's *Discourses on Universal History*, Quoted by George Solomon.)

This is the meek Jesus who was scourged for witnessing to the truth that the judgments of God were abroad and would fall on the devoted city. His bones were laid bare, and yet he cursed not his persecutors. He returned to Jerusalem to die, for he knew his time had come. He could not be dissuaded by his followers from returning to Jerusalem in the apprehension he should suffer the same harsh and cruel treatment, or worse, at the hands of the authorities. Authentic history corroborates these statements, but is definitely against the assumption that such events took place during the governorship of Pontius Pilate.

The followers of this Jesus may have suffered from the cruelty of Nero. Anyhow, events had happened enough to stir up in them emotions of frenzied enthusiasm. They had seen a meek prophet, whose wise warnings had spread far and wide, and had proved himself a tender-

hearted lover of his people, fall a victim to the obstinacy of the rulers. Such was the general esteem in which he was held, that he was accounted to have a divine spirit within him — a possession which is designated by the historian as a "*divine fury*." He had no learning, but he spoke the words of truth. He attained the maturity of manhood before his prophetic powers were recognized and his name became celebrated. His career was a short one, but in the course of it he uttered truths which remain unchallenged to this very day.

The miraculous events or phenomena which are recorded by the historian of the day, Josephus, had a most portentous character. In the traditional accounts furnished to the world at a subsequent period by the four Greek narrators of these events, these prodigies first became elaborated into a system of signs and wonders in attestation of his supernatural greatness. If what is unnatural be deemed miraculous, then these matters we are about to quote were miracles: "But before Caesar had determined anything about these people, or given the commanders any orders relating to them the soldiers were in such a rage that they set the cloisters on fire, by which means it came to pass that some of these were destroyed by throwing themselves down headlong, and some were burnt in the cloisters themselves; Nor did any one of these escape with his life. A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day that 'God commanded them to get up upon the Temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance.' Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose upon the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now, a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such promises; for, when such a seducer makes him believe that he shall be

delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such deliverance.

"Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself, while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them.

"Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet that continued a whole year. Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus (Nisan), and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house that it appeared to be bright daytime, which light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it. At the same festival (Passover) also, a heifer, as she was led by the high-priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the Temple." (*Wars of the Jews* Book vi. chap. 5, § 2)

A simple study the particulars of this narrative comparing it with the story of the Evangelists, readily discloses the parallel source of their ideal representation, including the inspiration suggested by the miraculous birth of a lamb brought forth in the stables of the Temple, to be sacrificed for the sins of the people and above in the heavens is shining the curious star which stood over the house where the miraculously conceived being was born.

To believe that "*so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house*" may appear difficult to some, but do

not we have the experience reported of Simon Peter indicating he saw such a light when he escaped from prison immediately after the sacrifice of this lamb? For Josephus in his description proceeds to describe this very event: — “Moreover the eastern gate of the inner (court of the) Temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord, about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the Temple came thereupon running to the captain of the Temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open to them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies; so these publicly declared that this signal foreshadowed the desolation that was coming upon them.”

Again, we stress that no such incidents as these occurred in the time of Pontius Pilate, but there is the historical proof to show that they happened at the period to which we refer, and the Temple records which attest them are unimpeachable. The evidence that will be furnished cannot fail to satisfy those who have any sense of historical truth that this is the so-called *Messianic age*, and that, as predicted, the people who lived in it did not believe in the true prophet, but the false, till the judgment came upon them, and the words of "*the meek and lowly one*" were fulfilled. The prophets of the day, who were all false save this one, taught the people to believe that the latter days had come and that when the worst came to the worst God would interfere and work deliverance.

Jesus had come and gone, and left disciples behind him, who believed that he had a divine mission to fulfil and a divine spirit within him. In his decease they both saw the fulfilment of that part of his prophecy which concerned himself and a token, of which there were other infallible indications that the ruin threatened would not fail to overtake the city and its people also. But before that event arrived, one other miracle took place, of which there are two accounts, one by the historian of the day, and the other in the Acts of the Apostles. The version given by Josephus is as follows: — "Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner (court of the) Temple, as their custom was to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that in the first place they felt a quaking and heard a great noise and after that they heard a sound, as of a multitude, saying, 'Let us remove hence'" (Wars of the Jews," Book vi. chap. 5, § 3.)

The version in the Acts in chap. 2: I, 2: — "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting." (KJV)

It should be obvious to the reader that the story told by the Greek writers, though traditionally conveyed, is historically grounded, and it has been our business all along to show that it is no mere cunningly devised fable. The traditional accounts are supported by the historical in their assertion of miraculous occurrences in connection with the fall of the Jewish state. Both introduce a prophet of the name of Jesus, who foretold the ruin of the nation and perished in the wreck. Both represent him as of humble birth, of meek, patient temper, hardly treated, sorely baffled, and sad at heart. Both, as they had many foes to whom they bore no rancor, so had they many followers to whom they owed no thanks. Both were instinct with a divine spirit and wandered over Judea,

denouncing the judgments of Heaven on all who would not repent. Neither left written records: only the weird echo of their piercing words, "*Woe! Woe!*" Both, strong in the divine justice of their mission, refused to plead for mercy before a human tribunal, and were dumb, opening not the mouth. Both predicted their own decease at Jerusalem, and the bones of both were laid bare in the torture they underwent. Both were looked upon as insane by an un-sympathizing world, while by a few they were revered as God-inspired and prophets of the Lord.

It is notable that the charge of insanity proffered against the Jesus of the Gospels is recorded in the Gospels themselves. Thus in John 10: 19, 20, we read: — "There was a division, therefore, among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said. He hath a devil and is mad; why hear ye him?" In Mark 3: 13-21 we read: — "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would; and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils. And Simon he surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder); and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said. *He is beside himself.*" And in verses 31-34, at the same time and place, it is further recorded: — "There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him; and they said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, 'Who is my mother or my brethren?' And he looked round about on them

which sat about him, and said, ‘Behold my mother and my brethren’" (KJV)

So, both the Jesus of History and the Jesus of tradition exposed themselves to the charge of insanity, and both exposed themselves to this reproach by a most singular life.

Let us conclude this chapter by calling again our Readers’ attention to the parallel we have sought to draw between the Jesus of Josephus and the Jesus of the Gospels. Is it not surprising that Josephus should make no mention of the first Jesus, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and the Evangelists make no mention of the second Jesus, so like the first in spirit and fate, and who suffered just before and during the siege of Jerusalem in 66-70CE? Can any other explanation account for this singular circumstance and the no less singular correspondence in the characters and history of the two prophets, except that, with all their inconsistencies otherwise, the accounts refer to the same period, the same incidents, and the same Jesus?

CHAPTER IX

Two Natures in Conflict

So far, then, it is evident beyond all cavil that, had the Jews listened to the warnings of the historical Jesus, their Temple, their city, and their nation would have been preserved. Titus did not seek their destruction; only such continued obedience and payment of tribute as was due for protection, and such homage as other nations yielded to the power and supremacy of Rome. It was his ardent wish to spare the Temple, the ancient city, and its people from destruction; and he again and again signified to the besieged this wish. *He even employed the mediation of Josephus himself, and literally implored them to yield*, if they would be spared. These stern realities are worthy of weighty consideration: it was their adoption of the *Messianic idea* from the false prophets of the day that determined them to resist to the bitter end, in consequence of which they were almost annihilated. How did it come to pass, then, seeing besieged and besieger equally deprecated the fulfilment of Jesus's prophecy, that it was fulfilled in spite of both their wishes, and in spite of the warning which, had they listened to it, would have saved the city?

It is equally clear and historically established that both the *Messianic* vision of Judas of *Gamala* (or the Galilean) and the Christian *Messianic* story were huge delusions: The Greek Gospels were written to the world in unambiguous language, that God had visited the earth and announced Himself as the redeemer and lord of the human family. Their declaration notified to the world that Jesus was both Messiah and God; that the latter days had come; that, after his ascension to heaven, he would return in the clouds before that generation had passed away; and that some of those to whom this promise was given should be still alive when the Son of man came back

again in all his glory. Both those who looked for a Messiah to come and those who look for a Messiah to return, have been disappointed. The last days according to both have come, and he has not, as both predicted, appeared to deliver.

The Jesus of tradition as painted by the four Greek writers is clearly different, though, from the Messiah expected by Judas the Galilean and his followers. The difference resides in his “*second nature*” presented as being “*God-in-the-Flesh*.” How can we explain the origin of this conception, and prove by historical evidence that the two natures are referable originally to two different persons, both of whom bore the name Jesus, lived at the same time, and had each a very marked character? — These men whose deeds, whose sentiments, whose characteristics, whose friends and colleagues and their characteristics, together with the incidents that befell them, compose when combined the main features of the picture drawn by the four Greek writers, which is *the traditional embodiment of the historical facts*. The children of those who were witnesses of the facts did not entirely misinform those who gathered their statements and put them in form, and the error in the chronology, which ascribes the main event to the era of Pontius Pilate, is easily accounted for by reference to the historical fact that *a pretender to prophecy had been executed by that procurator*, in a way to afford presumptive evidence that those who got up the story had no actual intention to falsify the facts. We therefore exempt those who supplied the traditional accounts from the serious charge of fraud, a charge which we are forced to place against the compilers of a later period, where the perversions which sprung out of the tradition itself were fraudulently and unjustly used as reliable evidence in proof of the truth of gross errors.

We have already quoted the testimony of Josephus to the existence of the prophetic Jesus, whose intense character

and emphatic procedure suggested the idea of a man possessed by a divine fury. This historical description, translated into the Greek language by the author himself, could not fail to confirm and intensify the statement made by tradition, that Jesus of Nazareth was *a divine character*. No other historical character is so described, and the wonderful fulfilment of his prophecies in his own death and the general desolation of Judea and destruction of the Temple, might well furnish the groundwork for those representations of events which, as inexplicable by any known law of cause and effect, are regarded as supernatural and miraculous to this day. It is true that though they are described as presages, portents, and prodigies, they would at this time of day come under the head of what are termed *phenomena*; but be this as it may, we can see strong reasons for believing that they were deemed miracles; and indeed, under the circumstances, many of the incidents so described are sufficiently inexplicable to exonerate those who so regarded them from the charge of wilful fraud in appealing to them in proof; while we must not forget that the accounts committed to writing were traditions collected, probably, from a multitude of different sources, each supplying a trait differing one from another, without exact dates, and each bringing into one moment incidents that took place on different occasions, many of them true, and confirmed by contemporary historians.

Now Josephus describes the Pontius Pilate era, and mentions *the deceiver who met his death at that Governor's hands*. The deceits practiced by him were ascertained deceits, his delusions were ascertained delusions. He did nothing of a miraculous character; and though he promised to show on the top of Mount Gerizim many wonderful things "*placed there by Moses*," it was ascertained that his statement was false, and that he deceived those who trusted him. Josephus it is, who earned his reputation for accuracy when the witnesses to

the facts narrated were still alive, that gives the account we have so often referred to of the Pontius Pilate pretender, and it is he too that furnishes the account of the Jesus whom we have designated as *the historical Jesus*, and that in his description speaks of his appearance as a presage of woe to Jerusalem, to the people, and to the Temple.

Now how is it that he should describe this latter personage as a prophet of truth, and the Pontius Pilate victim as a lying pretender? Why should he represent this Jesus as prophesying, in the most public manner, in the Temple and out of it, the judgment of God against the city and the inhabitants, and yet speak of the other as only a common deceiver?

Would he have enumerated the prophetic qualifications possessed by Jesus and yet shrunk from mentioning those of the Pontius Pilate pretender, if he possessed them? If he hesitated to ascribe preternatural attributes to the Pontius Pilate pretender, he would have equally hesitated to do so to the historical Jesus. But Josephus dared not, even if he had been disposed, ascribe, in the teeth of living witnesses, to the Pontius Pilate pretender those prophetic utterances which emanated from Jesus, a contemporary of his own day, who was too marked and well-known a character to be capable of distortion or perversion. If the Pontius Pilate pretender had been called Jesus, if he had prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, as well as his own death, if indeed he had performed one hundredth part of the wonders related by the four Greek writers of Jesus *the Christ*, how could it have been possible for the historian to have omitted or disguised the fact, and that in the presence of those who believed in him as the Messiah of the latter days, and looked for his return while they were yet alive in the flesh?

The Gospel narrative discloses the fact that Jesus promised to return to the earth immediately after the tribulation of those days, and the desolation predicted by Daniel. The 24th chapter of Matthew affords ample proof of this assertion, and we must quote in corroboration a verse or two (chap. 24: 13-31): — "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child and to them which give suck in those days: But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. . . . *Immediately after the tribulation of those days* shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other."

These quotations serve a double purpose: they convict, in the first place, this Gospel of testifying unto all nations of its own falsity, for the end has not come, although close to two thousand years have elapsed since the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stood in the holy place; and we may well add the

concluding part of the 15th verse quoted, "*Whoso readeth let him understand*"

Apart from these reflections, however, it does not appear illogical that the four Greek writers should have *believed* what tradition reported to them; still, as the narrative, collected from various sources, was committed to writing long after the fall of Jerusalem, we may not unreasonably inquire why they do not refer to the historical Jesus of that date, all the more that their traditional Jesus was expected to reappear.

The only explanation of this is to be found in the fact that the information handed down to the four Greek writers as a tradition referred to this very Jesus of whom Josephus relates. Years had elapsed since the appearance of this remarkable personage, and his career and fate could not fail to leave a deep impression on the generation that followed. His denunciations must have revived in a weird light in the hearts of men after their actual realization, and must have stamped themselves on the memory as the words of a prophet of the Lord; and his character as the possessor of divine attributes would, with each succeeding generation, gradually assume a more and more definite shape as a divine incarnation, the whole being in all probability a development of our historian's characterization of him as *a man aflame with a divine fury*, and of his description of him as he sent forth his wail of woe on the highway and at the solemn feasts. His heroic appearance under sentence of the rulers of the people and the Governor, when, though his bones were laid bare, he gave utterance to no repining, could not fail to enhance the idea of him in the hearts of his worshippers, and give plausibility, along with other manifestations, to their conception of him as a god. And all the more would this conception of him tend to assume this shape when it was remembered that he uttered his dire denunciations concerning Jerusalem which were so tragically fulfilled, at a time when the horizon seemed

clear of storms, and no mere human eye could have forecast the judgment at hand. Well might this reflection concur with others to confirm the conclusion which the traditional accounts say the Roman centurion came to at the cross when he exclaimed, "*Truly this was the son of God.*"

The memory of the character and mission of *this historical Jesus* would never die out; his mission took undebatable form in the minds of his disciples as *a Messianic mission*, while his personal qualities, both as a man and a seer, would, as they loomed larger through the increasing haze of tradition, be more and more referred to godhead and worshipped as divine. The Jewish nation had received no such warning from any preceding Jesus, and no prophet that had appeared had shown such signs. Had the Pontius Pilate pretender been inflamed with such zeal, made display of such heroic virtue, and sounded forth such words, Judea was not the country where nor was that the time when the memory of them would all at once have died out. The Greeks and Romans of the day would have been quite as alert as the Jews, and would not have left such marvelous wonders to be first rehearsed by four obscure writers, who produced their accounts long after the events, and when all the contemporaries of the period were dead. Has not the world, we repeat, extant at this hour, all that contemporary men could know of the real character of him who was killed by Pontius Pilate, written too while the witnesses of the period were still alive?

But while we think we have given the soundest reasons to disprove the chronology which refers the death of Jesus to the procuratorship of Pilate, we are bound to confess that the character of the later historical Jesus is not ample enough to cover the conception given in the Gospels of the traditional Christ or *Messiah*.

In such circumstances as these, we might stop short with the statement of our theory, and content ourselves with an appeal to what is recorded of the historical Jesus as explanatory of much that is peculiar to the traditional one; we might even be allowed to have made good our point, had we found ourselves unable to complete the account. But we have other historical material to refer to, however, and that we shall now bring to the reader's attention.

At the beginning of this chapter we referred to *a certain duality of character which the Evangelical writers ascribe to the traditional Jesus*. If they mention but one person, they at least ascribe to him attributes which can co-exist only in two separate natures, and are inconceivable in the unity of one and the same personality. No one who applies to the subject due reflection will long hesitate to admit this fact. Thus at one time we find him enforcing meekness and mercy, while at another his words are beset with the harshest severity: "Ye have heard that it hath been said" (Matt 5: 43), he insists on one occasion quoting a text as from the Bible, which is not there, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." (KJV) At another time this is what he says (Matt. 10: 14-15), "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city." (KJV) And again, while we read this in Matt. 9: 18-20, "And when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. And a certain scribe came and said unto him, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.' And Jesus saith unto him. 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to

lay his head;” it is immediately added verse 21, that "another of his disciples said unto him, ‘Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said unto him, ‘Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.’” (KJV) The one who would follow, he bids go, for he is poor; the one who would go, he bids follow, even at the sacrifice of his natural affection. Is not this proof of a contradictory temper, a sign which points to the hypothesis of two personalities?

At one time he insists on the eternal immutability of the Mosaic creed, and actually argues therefrom in assertion of the unity of God and his incommunicable goodness; at another he speaks of his gospel as the publication of a new law, and himself, not, like Moses, a servant, but the very son of the Most High. It is not, then, a consistently meek and merciful character that is here portrayed to us. At times, indeed, and often, the loving, merciful nature comes into relief and wins us by its tenderness, but at others he wears an air quite out of keeping with that of the helpless one who inspires us with sympathy for his deep sorrows and his tragic fate.

He who is alleged at one time to be poor and defenseless is at another invested with a power to work miracles and relieve others' wants; he can turn water into wine, and multiply a few loaves and fishes so as to feed a host. Of no one character could such contradictory sentiments and actions be predicated; in no one living character could they by any possibility unite. The man who could pray earnestly for mercy in behalf of his enemies, would not have cautioned his followers to provide themselves with swords. He whose meekness and mercifulness would not allow him to speak evil of his enemies could never be represented as an evil-doer, and under that accusation be put to death. Indeed it is impossible to conceive how such heterogeneous qualities should unite in one person; and it will be our business to furnish historical evidence to prove that the character conceived as one in tradition, and

described as one by the four Greek writers, has resulted from identifying two separate historical personages, contemporaries of one another, who, as related by Josephus, lived in Judea under the procuratorship of Albinus, the one described by us as the meek prophet, and the other, as we shall show in our next chapter, a great innovator, who was escorted by a number of poor Galilean fishermen, who was betrayed, who had coworkers and friends in the persons of John and Simon, both of whom were imprisoned and released, and who had to give to Josephus, as governor, seventy of the Galileans as hostages in pledge of peace.

CHAPTER X

The Other Jesus

The study of archeology has been prosecuted with great vigor in recent times, and memorials have been diligently sought to verify the traditions of history, secular as well as sacred. Many striking confirmations of the traditions referred to have been thereby brought to light, and great and many have been the hopes that have sprung up in connection with these explorations. *Gamala*, the City of Judas the Galilean, a large fortified city located on a high ridge above a crossing of two gorges, is one of the famous cities where Jewish rebels fought bravely against the Romans until their fatal end (see *Gamala* by David Donnini, 2010.)

Its story of bravery is well detailed in Josephus' historical accounts. The historian was actually the commander of the Galilee forces *who also fortified the city*. His story resembles the tragic accounts of Sepphoris and Masada, where the defenders fought the Roman legions until the tragic end. After its total ruin in 67CE, the location of Gamala was a mystery for 1900 years. Since its discovery in a survey of the Golan (1968), subsequent archaeological excavations have reconstructed several parts of the city. The findings closely match Josephus' accurate accounts and shed light on one of the most tragic events in the history of the land. While this diligent search for truth continues, there is no sign, however, that the story of the Greek writers can expect much auxiliary aid from archaeology. Time would first have to destroy the fabric they have reared before Archeologists can begin the work of reconstruction.

It would be saying too much were we to characterize the generation in which the four Greek writers lived as a more deluded one than our own. The religion these

writers introduced was received only by a section, and a very small section, of their contemporaries, while the great intelligent bulk of the populations among whom their teachings took root, all accustomed though they were to the idea of a man-god (*Greek and Roman mythology*) and the consequent idolatries, rejected the philosophy as a palpable delusion. This exemption from error, however, applies only to the judgment of the present or immediate past, by no mean to the views that are entertained of the earlier history of the world and the writings that record it; for it accepts as true to this day delusions and fanaticisms, by which only the ignorant were misled at the time of their first invention. How does it happen, we may ask, that we are so jealous of imposition to-day, and are so unwilling to confess we have been duped in regard to past deceptions? Yet this is precisely what has been done by the acceptance at the hands of the present generation of what at the introduction of Christianity was rejected by the great majority of the intelligent populations, and found favor with only a few of the ignorant multitude.

That there is a *missing link* in the history of the Christian traditions, as given in the account of the four Greek writers, has, since the development of a very recent spirit of inquiry, been generally acknowledged. There is a greater desire evinced to find this missing link, ever since historical research has demonstrated the fact that the Gospels were not written till the *second century*, at the earliest, and the canon fixed at the time of Emperor Constantine (*Council of Nicaea*, 325CE.) The difficulty to which we refer as still unresolved is this: How such events as those recorded in the Gospels could have happened and escape the observation of the public at the time, and all notice at the hands of the historians of the period? That the Almighty God should have visited the earth, performing godlike actions, both on earth and in the heavens, beyond the power of man to effect, in the sight of a nation — a nation, too, in a peculiar frame of

mind, on the tiptoe of expectation for the advent of their Messiah — without its being aware of any of these wonderful occurrences, presents an anomaly which we think has not only not been explained, but has not received the attention it calls for. The fact cannot be too often affirmed and reaffirmed, that the more numerous the miracles are referred to the period of Pontius Pilate's procuratorship, the weaker is the historical ground in support of them. Public wonders cannot be concealed.

Now, if this period saw the most wonderful events happened in the world since the Mosaic age, why was the account of them first published in the *second century after their alleged occurrence*, when no living witnesses were alive to deny or affirm their reality? Fortunately there is *a contemporary history of the time extent to which we can appeal*, and which substantively denies these traditional accounts, which must either have lain concealed from the eye of the world till then, or been first concocted at the time of their publication. Whatever grounds there may be and are for the assertions the accounts in question make in regard to the events of a later period, these events did not occur in the age of Pontius Pilate.

It is now time we should refer to *that other Jesus* of whom Josephus writes as contemporary with himself and the "*meek*" one, of whose character and fate he gives so touching a description. In calling attention to *this second Jesus* we would ask our readers to remark how it is the manner of the four Greek writers to blend different characters together and describe them as one; and not characters only, but incidents; in such combination, too, that it is next to impossible to sunder the confusion and fully disentangle the actual facts. The characters and actions they describe are not such as could possibly center in one personality; and this is especially the case with the central personage in their story; the explanation of which is, that they have confounded two notable

contemporaries of the same name into one. Certain traditions spoke of the one, some of the other, till at length the two got blended, and the characters, actions, and incidents peculiar to each separately were predicated of one only.

One of these was, as we have seen, a meek personage, who suffered torture for prophesying evil to the nation, and whose idiosyncrasies were of a peculiar, and extraordinary order. *The other Jesus*, whose life and fortunes are blended with his, was of a totally different character. By way of distinguishing the one from the other, we will describe the poor oppressed one, who proved himself to be a true prophet, as the *spiritual Jesus*, and the other as the *Mosaic Jesus*, because we consider him as the prototype of the severe side of the character of the traditional Jesus, as it appears in his zeal for the law of Moses.

The description of this *Mosaic Jesus* is chiefly given in the *Autobiography* of Josephus, although it is also slightly referred to in his *History of the Wars*. This Jesus with his coworkers John and Simon are introduced to us in connection with an insurrection in Galilee against the Roman authority. Josephus himself was at that time governor of the province, and in his wisdom endeavoring, in the interest of Rome, to reconcile his fellow-countrymen to its rule. This policy of his was obviously inconsistent with that of those who had other interests, and a confederacy was formed which sought unscrupulously to damage his government and procure his recall. This then was the situation when a collapse was brought about by *the betrayal of Jesus* and the incarceration of John and of Simon, the angel of whose release appears to have been none other than the magnanimous governor himself, from whose account of the matter we must now quote.

“Now, as soon as I was come into Galilee, and had learned this state of things by the information of such as told me of them, I wrote to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem about them, and required their direction what I should do. Their direction was, that I should continue there, and that if my fellow-legates were willing, I should join with them in the care of Galilee. But those my fellow-legates, having gotten great riches from those tithes which as priests were their dues, and were given to them, determined to return to their own country. Yet when I desired them to stay so long, that we might first settle the public affairs, they complied with me. So I removed, together with them, from the city of Sepphoris, and came to a certain village called Bethmaus, four furlongs distant from Tiberias; and thence I sent messengers to the senate of Tiberias, and desired that the principal men of the city would come to me; and when they were come, Justus himself being also with them, I told them that I was sent to them by the people of Jerusalem as a legate, together with these other priests, in order to persuade them to demolish that house which Herod the Tetrarch had built there, and which had the figures of living creatures in it, although our laws have forbidden us to make any such figures ; and I desired that they would give us leave so to do immediately. But for a good while Capellus and the principal men belonging to the city would not give us leave, but were at length entirely overcome by us, and were induced to be of our opinion. So *Jesus the son of Sapphias*, one of those, whom we have already mentioned as the leader of a seditious tumult of mariners and poor people, prevented us, and took with him certain Galileans, and set the entire palace on fire, and thought he should get a great deal of money thereby, because he saw some of the roofs gilt with gold. They also plundered a great deal of the furniture, which was done without our approbation; for, after we had discoursed with Capellus and the principal men of the city, we departed from Bethmaus, and went into Upper Galilee. But *Jesus and his party* slew all the Greeks that were inhabitants of

Tiberias, and as many others as were their enemies *before the war began*.

“When I understood this state of things, I was greatly provoked, and went down to Tiberias, and took all the care I could of the royal furniture, to recover all that could be recovered from such as had plundered it. They consisted of candlesticks made of Corinthian brass, and of royal tables, and of a great quantity of uncoined silver; and I resolved to preserve whatsoever came to my hand for the king. So I sent for ten of the principal men of the senate, and for Capellus, the son of Antyllus, and committed the furniture to them, with this charge, that they should part with it to nobody else but to myself. From thence I and my fellow-legates went to Gischala, to *John*, as desirous to know his intentions, and soon saw that he was for innovations, and had a mind to the principality, for he desired me to give him authority to carry off that corn which belonged to Caesar and lay in the villages of Upper Galilee; and he pretended that he would expend what it came to in building the walls of his own city. But when I perceived what he endeavored at, and what he had in his mind, I said I would not permit him so to do, for that I thought either to keep it for the Romans or myself, now that I was entrusted with public affairs there by the people of Jerusalem. But, when he was not able to prevail with me, he betook himself to my fellow-legates; for they had no sagacity in providing for futurity, and were very ready to take bribes. So he corrupted them with money to decree, that all that corn which was within his province should be delivered to him; while I, who was but one, was outvoted by two, and held my tongue. Then did John introduce another cunning contrivance of his; for he said that those Jews who inhabited Caesarea Philippi, and were shut up by the order of the king's deputy there, had sent to him to desire him, that, since they had no oil that was pure for their use, he would provide a sufficient quantity of such oil that came from the Greeks, and thereby transgress their

own laws. Now this was said by *John*, not out of his regard to religion, but out of his most flagrant desire of gain, for he knew that two sextaries were sold with them of Caesarea for one drachma; but that at Gischala fourscore sextaries were sold for four sextaries. So he gave order that all the oil which was there should be carried away, as having my permission for so doing; which yet I did not grant him voluntarily, but only out of fear of the multitude; since, if I had forbidden him, I should have been stoned by them. When I had therefore permitted this to be done by *John*, he gained vast sums of money by this his knavery. But when I had dismissed my fellow-legates, and sent them back to Jerusalem, I took care to have arms provided, and the cities fortified. And when I had sent for the most hardy among the robbers, I saw that it was not in my power to take their arms from them; but I persuaded the multitude to allow them money as pay, and told them it was better for them to give them a little willingly, rather than (be forced to) to overlook them, while they plundered their goods from them. And when I had obliged them to take an oath not to come into that country, unless they were invited to come, or else when they had not their pay given them, I dismissed them, and charged them neither to make an expedition against the Romans, nor against those their neighbors that lay round about them; for my first care was to keep Galilee in peace. So I was willing to have the principal of the Galileans, in all *seventy*, as hostages for their fidelity, but still under the notion of friendship. Accordingly I made them my friends and companions as I journeyed, and set them to judge causes; and with their approbation it was that I gave my sentences, while I endeavored not to mistake what justice required, and to keep my hands clear of all bribery in those determinations." (Life of Josephus, Sec. 12-14)

While it is desirable and necessary that our readers should consult the pages of history for themselves in order to discover and estimate the exact amount of

historical truth at the basis of the traditional narratives, it is still necessary for us, in order to impart connection to our argument, that we should relate the attitude assumed and the action taken by John, Simon, and Jesus in this case against Josephus, while at the same time we transfer to our pages such historical verifications as may tend to the identification of these historical characters with those which have come down to us in the traditions of later ages.

Thus far we have in the above quotations, it appears, a substantial parallel between the character of this Jesus and the incidents of his life and certain marked features given in the traditional narratives. Jesus is the leader of '*poor people and mariners*' (alias *fishermen*); the people are *Galileans*, seventy of whom are accepted as semi-hostages for their good behavior, who, nevertheless, are permitted to journey about and give decisions in questions of religion, for the laws of the land were the laws of God, the laying down of which might be described as teaching. These facts are similar to those mentioned in the Gospels, and are no doubt identical with them.

We will not lay much stress upon John's trickery to obtain the corn and the oil, and the coincidence between the mention of them here and the reference to those articles afterwards in certain parallel circumstances in the book of Revelation.

In order to make clearer the conspiracy of *John, Jesus, and Simon* against the authority of Josephus, we must quote a passage or two more from his autobiography (sections. 21, 22:) — "But now another great number of the Galileans came together again, with their weapons, as knowing the man (*John*) how wicked and how sadly perjured he was, and desired me to lead them against him, and promised me that they would actually destroy both him and Gischala. Hereupon I professed that I was

obliged to them for their readiness to serve me, and that I would more than requite their good-will to me. However I entreated them to restrain themselves, and begged of them to give me leave to do what I intended, which was to put an end to these troubles without bloodshed; and when I had prevailed with the multitude of the Galileans to let me do so, I came to Sepphoris. But the inhabitants of this city, having determined to continue in their allegiance to the Romans, were afraid of my coming to them, and tried by putting me upon another action to divert me, that they might be freed from the terror they were in. Accordingly they sent to *Jesus, the captain of those robbers who were in the confines of Ptolemais*, and promised to give him a great deal of money, if he would come with those forces he had with him, which were in number eight hundred, and fight with us. Accordingly he complied with what they desired, upon the promises they had made him, and was desirous to fall upon us, when we were unprepared for him, and knew nothing of his coming beforehand. So he sent to me, and desired that I would give him leave to come and salute me. When I had given him that leave, which I did without the least knowledge of his treacherous intentions beforehand, he took his band of robbers, and made haste to come to me. Yet did not this knavery succeed well at last; for as he was already nearly approaching, *one of those with him deserted him*, and came to me and told me what he had undertaken to do. When I was informed of this, I went into the market-place, and pretended to know nothing of his treacherous purpose. I took with me many Galileans that were armed, as also some of those of Tiberias; and when I had given orders that all the roads should be carefully guarded, I charged the keepers of the gates to give admittance to none but *Jesus* when he came, *with the principal of his men*, and to exclude the rest, and in case they aimed to force themselves in, to use stripes (in order to repel them). Accordingly those that had received such a charge did as they were bidden, and Jesus came in with a few others and when I had ordered him to throw

down his arms immediately, and told him that if he refused so to do he was a dead man, he, seeing armed men standing all about him, was terrified and complied; and as for *those of his followers that were excluded, when they were informed that he was seized they ran away*. I then called Jesus to me by himself, and told him that I was not a stranger to that treacherous design he had against me, nor was I ignorant by whom he was sent for; that, however, I would forgive him what he had done already if he would repent of it, and be faithful to me hereafter. And thus, upon his promise to do all that I desired, I let him go, and gave him leave to get those whom he had formerly had with him together again. But I threatened the inhabitants of Sepphoris, that, if they would not leave off their ungrateful treatment of me, I would punish them sufficiently."

Here we have historical confirmation of *that Jesus* who was *the friend of Simon and John*, and had as his followers "*poor Galileans, mariners who were in his pay*," one of whom had betrayed him to Josephus the priest and governor, and all of whom fled when they knew he was seized. These no doubt are the same facts which were by and by incorporated in the traditional accounts, and connected with the history of Jesus of Nazareth.

And let no one reject the derivation we allege as irreverence; the accusation can be brought with equal reason against the Evangelists themselves, one of them deemed the most accurate, and the other reputed the best beloved of his master. In Luke 22: 34-36 we read: — "And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shall thrice deny that thou knowest me. And he said unto them, 'When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?' And they said. 'Nothing.' 'Then' said he unto them. 'But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it and likewise his

scrip; and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one" (KJV)

This is the address of Jesus to his followers just before the arrival of the multitude sent to arrest him at the instance of the chief priest, into whose hands he was betrayed; and it is evidently suggested by the memory of the circumstances in which his prototype found himself when about to be betrayed into the hands of the governor of Galilee. Both the historical and the traditional narratives record two identical facts: that Jesus was betrayed by one of his followers, and that he was abandoned and shamefully deserted by the rest of them. It might have been reasonably concluded that in such a situation he came by his end, though he was in fact permitted by Josephus to return to his followers.

The great point of our inquiry now is the moral character of Jesus; and whether we look to the *historical spiritual Jesus*, whom we have described as pre-eminently meek, who suffered at the hands of man the direst torture, without one word of denunciation except the denunciation of impending destruction, or whether we look to the meek side of the Jesus whose loving mercy is depicted in the pages of the Greek Evangelists, what we maintain is that it is impossible to accept the characteristics quoted above as the characteristics of either of these, and that therefore *the narrative of the four Greek writers describes two persons*. No one person, if sane, could by any possibility exhibit such contradictory features. Look, for instance, at the language he uses on the eve of his betrayal. The followers of Jesus were insufficiently armed, and being believed by him to have, some of them money, some a scrip, some a garment to dispose of, they were urged by him, if reduced to the last extremity, to sell their garment and buy a sword. This could not be for ornament; for that purpose garments are generally more useful; it could only be that a sword

would, in the circumstances then imminent, be of greater help.

A more ingenious speech could not be conceived to induce a body of men to act in the way desired; for the exhortation reminds them of *the speaker's power to provide for them* in the future since he had done so in the past, and that they were only asked to dispose of those things they had received in his service. Now it is plain that this procedure on the part of the traditional Jesus is altogether inconsistent and quite irreconcilable with the character ascribed, to the meek, long-suffering Jesus of Josephus. Indeed, it is impossible that he who is described in the Gospels as a tender-hearted, loving teacher, should ever be charged as a malefactor and arraigned as a criminal, had it not been for the tradition concerning his namesake who believed in the sword.

Here is the charge which was brought against him (John 18: 29, 30 :) —"Pilate then went out unto them, and said, 'What accusation bring ye against this man?' They answered and said unto him, 'If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee.'" (KJV) Is it conceivable that such a charge as this should be made against the meek Jesus, whose only offence was warning his countrymen of coming evil, and who is uniformly represented in the evangelical tradition as giving life and not destroying it?

On, the other hand, this is the very charge which history records was brought against his contemporary, the friend of John and Simon, and who was just such a man as to earn the title *malefactor* here given him by John, being he who, according to Luke, urged his followers to sell their garments, and procure swords. These deeds are not historically charged against the meek Jesus, who was more sinned against than sinning; they were the actions of *another Jesus, who was in reality an evil-doer*. It is the

four Greek writers who charge the meek, merciful Jesus with these crimes, and not the historian of the period.

Josephus tells us that there were two men of the same name, both notable and living at the same time, and that a time when portents and prodigies of a striking kind amazed the Judean world; that the one was inspired with the belief that he was a prophet, and was, in fact, instinct with a certain "*divine fury*;" that he preached a gospel of woe through the length and breadth of the land; and though they tried and again tried to torture him into silence, they could not persuade him to desist. The other Jesus, Josephus tells us, though of kindred pretensions, was a man of a stern, uncompromising spirit, and sought other ends, who was forsaken by all his followers after having been betrayed by one of them. Now it is the characters of these two men as described by Josephus which we think gave rise to the conception of the traditional Jesus, while the capital mistake committed by the Evangelists in their chronology is, we think, due to a further confusion in the Greek mind of this Jesus with the prophet who suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Thus the traditional narratives are at fault in antedating the time of the events and in combining two historical characters into one being, while the theological instinct has at the same time resolved the one back into two by representing the being in question as partaker at once of the divine and the human natures. Thus there are two theoretical barriers to the reception of this *Christ*; the one moral, due to incompatibility of character, and the other physical, due to incompatibility of nature.

At this point it is for the reader to say whether the man described by Luke as a man of the sword, and arraigned in John as a malefactor, so unlike in these and others respects to the meek martyr of Jerusalem, is, as the Gospels allege, God Almighty Himself, or only a fanatical echo of the physical-force reformer of Galilee.

Is not this last the original side of the character of him who is described as having fishermen for followers, and as betrayed into the hands of the rulers, and his woe-struck contemporary the original of the other side of the same being, who is represented as meek and lowly of heart?

Anyhow, all this inquiry proves that most of the traditional statements have a basis in prior historical relations, and this fact is an evidence of the desire of the writers to compose a narrative of actual occurrences. Josephus supplies further details of the character of this Galilean Jesus, who, we see throughout, is quite innocent of the meekness ascribed to his notable namesake. We cannot, of course, transcribe these details here, and must content ourselves with referring the reader to Josephus himself. One extract more, however, we shall give from his pages bearing on this notable character.

Josephus says in sec. 27 of his *Autobiography*: - "Now when all Galilee was filled with this rumor, that their country was about to be betrayed by me to the Romans, and when all men were exasperated against me, and ready to bring me to punishment, the inhabitants of Taricheae did also themselves suppose that what the young men said was true, and persuaded my guards and armed men to leave me when I was asleep, and to come presently to the hippodrome, in order there to take counsel against me their commander. And when they had prevailed with them, and they were gotten together, they found there a great company assembled already, who all joined in one clamor, to bring the man who was so wicked to them as to betray them, to his due punishment; and it was *Jesus*, the son of Sapphias, who principally set them on. He was ruler in Tiberias, a wicked man, and naturally disposed to make disturbances in matters of consequence; a seditious person he was indeed, and an innovator beyond everybody else. He then took the laws of Moses into his hands, and came into the midst of the

people, and said, ‘my fellow-citizens, if you are not disposed to hate Josephus on your own account, have regard however to these laws of your country, which your commander-in-chief is going to betray; hate him therefore on both these accounts, and bring the man who hath acted thus insolently to his deserved punishment.’”

This language is consistent with what the traditional Jesus says, so much in opposition to his other utterances, as to the imperishability of the law of Moses, and is quite in keeping with the harsh demand he made on one to follow him who pled to be allowed to go first and bury his father. So that we see, however much inconsistencies abound in the traditional reports, there is reason to believe that, if we except the philosophy they were adduced to support, *none of the features of these accounts were the work of invention*, but had all their basis in some fact or other, recorded or unrecorded, in the history of the period. *There was no intention to deceive*, only at worst a weak credulity at work in hearts prostrate before the allegation of a preternatural epiphany, itself the product of a wild enthusiasm that sprung up on the eve of a great dissolution.

CHAPTER XI

My Books tell the whole truth (Josephus)

In our last chapter we introduced our readers to the account which Josephus gives of *the Galilean Jesus* and his followers, and how, when our historian was in authority in the district, that impostor stirred up the people against him, and charged him, in his policy of submission to Rome, with betraying the law of Moses and subverting the theocratic government which he had sanctified the Israelites to set up. The machinations of this man and his coworkers caused Josephus no small trouble, and it was only by his own wit and energy he was able so to use the power he was invested with as to escape out of their hands.

By these means his enemies were outwitted and captured, and then released in a way to convince them of his own power and their impotence to resist. And all this is related by him in a manner such as to establish an identity between his narrative and a chapter in the traditional accounts.

At this time Josephus was a man of thirty, and the authority he held was a priestly one, subject to the Roman Government. To throw off the yoke of this last, the people had been stirred up, mainly by the philosophy of the sect founded by Judas of Galilee, and they were now led on by this Galilean Jesus, who proved himself to be the greatest of all *innovators*, a seditious person, appealing to the laws of Moses in justification of his action and advice.

This new philosophy of Judas of Galilee, which was in reality opposed to true Mosaic principles, had exercised a great influence over the younger people, who took it up enthusiastically, and, among the rest, this Jesus, who

preached it forth prophetically, got multitudes to follow him, and essayed to propagate it by the sword, with such zeal that his name, and not Judas's, who was now dead, was handed down to posterity as that of the founder of the new faith. That Judas was the founder we know on the unimpeachable authority of Josephus, but it was perfectly natural his name should in the traditional reports be merged and lost in that of his zealous disciple, so that it is as easy to account for *the change of name* as for the chief error in the chronology, and the blending into one of this fiery enthusiast for the law and the meek martyr of Jerusalem.

The genesis of these errors, hence of Christianity as a new religion, may be easily traced by reference to the pages of Josephus, who has been proved to be the most reliable historian by men of the greatest learning and the soundest judgment, from the first publication of his work down to the present time. Josephus needs no tribute from us; his reputation for truth and accuracy is universally acknowledged, and the force of an appeal to his testimony is such as to defy all contradiction.

When he was governor of Galilee he must have met with many who were alive during the procuratorship of Pilate, whose recall took place just thirty years before; that is, therefore, at the time he himself was born. All those who were upwards of thirty years of age must have been witnesses of the wonderful events which are recorded in the Gospels as having in their day taken captive the Galilean world; and he must have heard of these events from them or their children, if they ever happened. If so, some of them must have shared in the multiplication of the loaves or witnessed the miraculous draught of fishes; as their contemporaries of Judea might have been able to testify of the raising of Lazarus. Many of them might have known, too, of the lame who had been made to walk and the blind who had been made to see. It is reasonable to presume there were multitudes who were acquainted

with the relatives of Jesus. Or are we to believe that all these things were familiarly known by sense or hearsay to every native of the district, but kept hid from the intelligent governor, who was wide-awake all the while, taking notes too to "print" them?

Josephus fills his pages with the story of this fanatical Jesus and his feeble-minded crew, whom he treats so lightly as to set them at large again after their arrest, as of no great political account, yet knows nothing and says nothing, of *that other*, whom multitudes wandered after while he lived, and who was now worshipped as a god since his death, by zealous, fast-spreading communities. He carefully, conscientiously, and patiently traces the history of the nation from its roots, ransacks all records and examines all witnesses to get at the facts, reports with minute detail the events of his own day and of that of his father, is at pains to describe the religion of Judas of Galilee, with the fanaticism he inspired and the turmoil and trouble his followers caused in society, and condescends to notice the most insignificant personages and events, whose connection with the movement afoot was often only of the remotest character, supplying in regard to some of these particulars enough, if it were worth, to complete a rounded biography; he tells us, as we have seen, of the impostor of Samaria, who came to grief, both himself and his followers, and brought the procurator Pontius Pilate into disgrace with his superiors; he tells of the meek martyr who brought woe upon himself in denouncing woe upon the people; and he tells, finally, of him whose cause so collapsed that he and his band were glad to accept forgiveness at his own hands as governor; — and all this, not as the Evangelists, who blunder at every turn, but with the graphic power of an immediate witness; and all the while he says nothing of the Jesus who wrought such wonders and died on a cross under Pilate, to whose earthly life, notwithstanding, Christendom looks back with believing regard as the incarnation of deity.

Now let us hear what account Josephus himself gives of his historical labors. He says (Book xx. c. II, § 2:)— "I shall now, therefore, make an end here of my Antiquities; after the conclusion of which events, I began to write that account of the war; and these Antiquities contain what hath been delivered down to us from the original creation of man until the twelfth year of the reign of Nero, as to what hath befallen the Jews, as well in Egypt as in Syria and in Palestine, and what we have suffered from the Assyrians and Babylonians, and what afflictions the Persians and Macedonians, and after them the Romans, have brought upon us; for I think I may say that I have composed this history with sufficient accuracy in all things. I have attempted to enumerate those high-priests that we have had during the interval of two thousand years. I have also carried down the succession of our kings, and related their actions and political administration without errors, as also the power of our monarchs; and all according to what is written in our sacred books; for this it was that I promised to do in the beginning of this history, and I am so bold as to say, now I have so completely perfected the work I proposed to myself to do, that no other person, whether he were a Jew or a foreigner, had he ever so great an inclination to it, could so accurately deliver these accounts to the Greeks as is done in these books. For those of my own nation freely acknowledge that I far exceed them in the learning belonging to the Jews. I have also taken a great deal of pains to attain the learning of the Greeks, and understand the elements of the Greek language, although I have so long accustomed myself to speak our own tongue that I cannot pronounce Greek with sufficient exactness, for our nation does not encourage those that learn the languages of many nations, and so adorn their discourses with the smoothness of their periods, because they look upon this sort of accomplishment as common, not only to all sorts of freemen, but to as many of the servants as please to learn them. But they give him the testimony of being a wise man who is fully acquainted with our laws

and is able to interpret their meaning; on which account, as there have been many who have done their endeavors with great patience to obtain this learning, there have yet hardly been so many as two or three that have succeeded therein, who were immediately well rewarded for their pains."

In these books, while he makes mention of prophets true and false, he denies, writing fifty years after the recall of Pilate, that any new sect had arisen among the Jews except the sect of Judas of Galilee; and it is impossible to account for the reputation he had for historical fidelity if it be true that there existed another founded by Jesus of Nazareth. Nor is it any fault of his that the traditional accounts ignore Judas and speak only of Jesus. About this Jesus he is, as we have seen, explicit enough, and no one who had studied his account could have fallen into the post-historical blunder. Neither, could the Evangelists have confounded the victim of the Pontius Pilate policy with the Jesus of history, based on Josephus' record. He was a Samaritan and not a Galilean; he lived in a period marked by no portent, prodigy, or miraculous sign; and not one fact is recorded of him, as of the other two, to identify him with the Jesus of tradition, except the fact of his having suffered under Pilate. Moreover, had the Evangelists consulted Josephus, they would have found that the Jesus whom they supposed to be one was really two, and they might have concluded from him, had they thought, that only in the light of this fact could the inconsistencies in the character be reconciled to reason.

As we read the traditional accounts, the conviction is forced upon us that the writers in their simplicity believed they were recording what had escaped the notice of the historians of the day, and that but for them the facts they relate would never have been reported in the ear of the world; as if this fact did not directly undermine the ground on which they stood and contradict their explicit assertions. But it is not true, as they assume, that

they only are the witnesses of the facts related, for not only, as we have seen, does the historian of the day record events of vastly inferior importance, but he actually gives the lie direct to the assertions they make, that the transactions they relate happened under the procuratorship of Pilate, and that the founder of the new faith was Jesus of Nazareth, who, according to Luke's testimony, must have been only a very young man at the period of Pilate's recall. And who shall say what other contradictions to their historical witness-bearing his pages may yield when once these are studied more closely!

What the Greek writers have done in regard to real History amounts to this: they have referred events and incidents which occurred towards the fall of Jerusalem (70CE) to the days of Pilate (37CE) and though they make the Pontius Pilate prophet utter predictions in regard to his return, they not only take no note of the events amidst which his return was expected, but they write in utter unconsciousness of all that transpired; they do not know that the story they write respects two men of totally opposite character, who first made their appearance in this latter period.

CHAPTER XII

How Christianity was invented

The account of the meek Jesus given by Josephus may be called dramatic history, but when embellished in tradition by combination with the character and the events in the life of the other, it becomes dramatic history combined with fiction. The former is infinitely preferable, although much less sensational.

The vices when thus combined with the virtues escape recognition, and become invested with a certain halo of sacredness. It is so the Christian has come to regard the picture given in the Gospels; hence he falls before the character portrayed as a paragon of perfection to be only worshipped and historical reality is lost in the indiscriminate glamour.

We have endeavored to some extent to disconnect the traditional links which bound together into one the two Jesus, and we have shown that the imagined traditional unity is a compound of two personalities. They are to be seen as two separate individuals in history, and turn up as one individual first in tradition. The moral character of the one nature that of the meek sufferer is tarnished by the blending of the defects of the other, that of the violent *innovator* and the disharmony first appears when we have resolved the two into distinct persons.

The meek Jesus is not responsible for all this abuse and idolatry. He suffered because his countrymen resented his warning of woe and the implied condemnation; and if his prophetic utterances are to be judged by their fulfilment, he must be acknowledged to have been a prophet. The "*divine fury*" or passion ascribed to him by the historian testifies impressively to the effect of his mission upon his contemporaries. Indeed the pages of

Josephus yield the only historical account the world to this hour possesses of the impression made by that "*divine fury*" of his on the minds of his contemporaries, and his appearance at the time in the Judean world.

It has been our sad task to show how often the four Greek writers blend events and characters which can only be disintegrated by research into the facts of history. A further instance occurs in confirmation of the charge in connection with the deaths of the two Herods — that of Herod the first, "*who was eaten up of worms*," and that of his grandson, Agrippa the Great, both described by the historian. This is his relation of the latter event: — "Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Caesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower, and there he exhibited shows in honor of Caesar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment, being illuminated by the first reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a god; and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery; but as he presently afterwards looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him, and fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose

in his belly and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, 'I whom you call a god am commanded presently to depart this life, while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept of what Providence allots, as it pleases God; for we have by no means lived ill, but in a splendid and happy manner.' When he said this, his pain was become violent. Accordingly he was carried into the palace, and the rumour went abroad everywhere that he would certainly die in a little time." (*Antiquities*, Book xix. Chap. 8, sec. 2)

In conclusion, Josephus continues: — "When he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age and the seventh year of his reign."

Our readers will observe that this account of the death of Agrippa the Great, the grandson of the first Herod, is a separate and different account from that of the death of his grandfather many years previously; and the following quotation from the Acts shows that the traditional accounts have again blended into one the deaths of the grandfather and the grandson: — "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten up of worms, and gave up the ghost." (Acts 12: 21, 22)

In this version an angel of the Lord is introduced, instead of the owl seen by the king in the historian's account, agreeably to a style these writers have of representing calamities that overtake the persecutors of their faith as special judgments from the Lord in their behalf. But apart from the false idea thus conveyed in regard to the

interposition of Providence, the facts are jumbled in the usual way, and the same disregard appears of real history. Let us briefly review our findings so far, in regard to facts: We have separated the Pontius Pilate pretender from all connection with the Jesus of the Gospels, the meek Jesus of Jerusalem from the Galilean Jesus of the sword, the death of Herod the Great from that of his grandson Agrippa, and we have referred the doctrine of the immortality of the soul to the early Jewish sects, and the gospel which first preached the kingdom of God to Judas of Galilee. The light in the heavens and the miraculous opening of the great gate, reported in connection with the imprisonment of Simon Peter, are proved to have taken place in the time of the historical Jesus. The birth on a Passover of a lamb from a heifer in the stables of the Temple, which had been brought there to be offered in sacrifice for the sins of the people, and the star that appeared in the heavens above the house at about the same time, together with other supernatural manifestations, are evidently the basis of certain well-known traditions in the Gospel story. It is known to be a fact that Herodias had but one daughter by her first husband, named Salome, who was married to her uncle Philip, who, dying a year and a half before Tiberius, left her a widow; and yet she is called a 'damsel' (*'a girl'*) by the Greek writers, who represent her as asking her stepfather for the head of John the Baptist, and that during the lifetime of her husband, the matter being reported, as usual, in disregard of the facts. Neither is there any historical evidence of a person existing at the time answering to the character of John. The baptizer Banus, who is the only historical personage mentioned by Josephus as having any connection with the symbolical use of water, must have been a comparatively young man to have gained the reputation he enjoyed when Josephus was his disciple. He was, no doubt, the original John, born therefore at the time Luke says Jesus was. Had Banus had a predecessor in the same line named John, he would not have failed to mention it to Josephus when he

stayed with him, and Josephus would not have failed to record what he heard, interested as he was to leave behind him, as the main labor of his life, a record of the religious movements of his time and country.

Now all this, taken in connection with the proved historical untrustworthiness of the traditional accounts, points to but one conclusion, and that is that the accounts given by Josephus of the Pontius Pilate pretender, of Banus, and of the two Jesus — the appearance of which last was accompanied by portents without precedent in merely secular history — form the basis of the story of the characters and events that figure on the pages of the traditional narratives known as the New Testament. Christianity is, therefore a purely mythical invention without any real historical groundwork whatever. It is only faith in four obscure writers, who are contradicted by the Bible, contradicted by history, contradicted by their ancestors, contradicted by their contemporaries, contradicted by themselves, and contradicted by one another. No faith can be placed in such writings. Never, either in works of controversy or in the courts of justice is any reliance placed on the asseverations of persons who stand convicted of untruth and unreason, albeit it is to the statements of these four men that the Church compels obedience, and generations of the people have yielded submission.

CHAPTER XIII

Testimonium Flavianum Fraud

The fall of Jerusalem was in a way due to the expectation of a Messiah, as the same Josephus tells us: "Now, if any one consider these things, he will find that God takes care of mankind, and by all means possible foreshows to our race what is for their preservation, but that men perish by those miseries which they madly and voluntarily bring upon themselves; for the Jews, by demolishing the tower of Antonia, had made their Temple *four-square*, while at the same time they had it written in their sacred oracles that 'then should their city be taken, as well as their holy house, when once their Temple should become four-square.' But now, what did most elevate them in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle, that was also found in their sacred writings, how ' about that time one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.' The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea. However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand. But these men interpreted some of these signals according to their own pleasure, and some of them they utterly despised, until their madness was demonstrated, both by the taking of their city and their own destruction." (*Book of the Wars*, book vi. chap. 5. § 4)

It was, then clearly the expectation, *not the advent of a Messiah*, which drove the Jewish people to such desperate course. It was the new religion founded by Judas of Galilee which deluded the younger generation into the expectation of a divine deliverance that ended in the destruction of their city and the massacre of their

people. This was, unfortunately the clearest proof which could be desired that no Messiah had appeared, and that the prediction, on the ground of which the expectation of his coming was based, had not been fulfilled. Josephus would never, in connection with these events, have said that the only sect that arose in his day taught the expectation of a Messiah, if another existed that affirmed in the face of the world he had come. The allegation of the existence of such a sect is demonstrably false, as the historian would never have denied the fact with communities all round who could have contradicted him to his face.

If Paul, as is alleged, wrote his series of epistles in the days of Claudius Caesar (41-54CE) and Nero (54-68CE,) his writings must have been extant during the early life and manhood of Josephus, and yet this historian denies the existence, root and branch, of the Christian religion and its founder, and repeats that denial in the fifty-sixth year of his life as follows: — "And now it will not be perhaps an invidious thing, if I treat briefly of my own family, and of the actions of my own life, *while there are still living such as can either prove what I say to be false, or can attest that it is true*; with which account I shall put an end to these Antiquities, which are contained in twenty books, and sixty thousand verses. And if God permit me, I will briefly run over this war again, with what befell us therein to this very day, which is the thirteenth year of the reign of Caesar Domitian, and the fifty-sixth year of my own life." (*Antiquities*, book xx. chap. 11 § 2)

Here, indeed, we have Josephus, half a century after the recall of Pontius Pilate, challenging his contemporaries to deny anything he had written up to that period, and among the statements challenged are those which affirm that no other sect had arisen in his day except that of Judas of Galilee, no other ascetic corresponding to John the Baptizer except Banus, and no other Jesus of a public

character except the meek one of Jerusalem and the violent Galilean, whose activities he first and last gives any historical notice. Nowhere in all his writings is there mention of Jesus the Christ or his sect, except *one clumsy reference inserted in his pages after his decease by a daring interpolator*. The mention, we refer to is made in the *Antiquities of the Jews*, book xviii. chap. 3 § 3, and occurs in the following terms: —

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was (the) Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”

The first objection to the genuineness of the paragraph is that it is a gratuitous interruption of the stream of the narrative, and has no connection with the paragraphs which precede and follow.

The second objection is that it is out of place, and not in the historian's manner, to make mention of the Christian tribe as “*not extinct to this day*” in a paragraph referring to the time of Pilate's procuratorship, when as the Evangelists show, the name and sect did not exist.

The third objection is that in no case could Christians be called a tribe by Josephus, but a sect. That would certainly not be a proper designation for a sect of philosophy, and one, as even the four Greek writers allow, first established only long afterwards.

The fourth objection to this paragraph being genuine is that Josephus was committed, as the professed historian of the period, to refer to at least some of the ten thousand

wonderful things concerning him, had they had any reality.

The fifth objection lies in the fact that in that passage of his history in which he gives an account of the pretender of the Pilate period he says nothing of this far more remarkable figure, who, it is alleged, suffered under the same administration a similar fate.

The sixth objection we make to the genuineness of the paragraph in question is that Josephus, in describing the new religion of Judas of Galilee, expressly asserts that *no other arose in that time*.

The seventh objection we have to offer to this impious fraud is that when Josephus accounts for the obstinacy of the Jews at the siege of Jerusalem by reference to a widespread expectation that a Messiah was coming, he says nothing at all then of a Messiah having come and risen from the dead, "*as the divine prophets had foretold*." That expectation was simply represented as arising from an ambiguous oracle that was found in their sacred writings, how about this time *one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth*.

Now the perpetrators of this forgery, or pious fraud, as it is more mildly called, must have seen the necessity of some confirmation from the pen of the historian of the period of the wonderful events which the later Greek writers believed had taken place in those preceding years but in their haste to commit the fraud, — which is not found in every copy of Josephus, — they did not reflect upon the fact that Josephus had already and elsewhere referred to an insignificant prophet of the time, and never mentioned the name of Jesus of Nazareth. They did not reflect that he had already named all the sects that had appeared in Judea fifty-six years after Pilate's recall, and had nowhere spoken of the sect of the Christians, but by implication asserted their non-existence. They did not

reflect that his testimony in regard to the non-existence of Christianity was confirmed by another historian of the period, *Justus of Tiberias*, whose only quarrel with Josephus respected not a historical but a political question, and hinged on the charges each brought against the other of having accelerated the ruin of the country (this is borne out in Heinrich Luther's *Doctoral Thesis* in Halle, 1910.) They did not reflect that Josephus had furnished an account of another Jesus, who was instinct with the same spirit, had uttered the same woes, and suffered the same fate, amid similar miraculous attendant circumstances. They did not reflect that the historian - whom in their interpolation they make skip over all the ten thousand wonderful prophetic fulfilments in the career of the traditional Jesus - is the very man who *historically* relates all these so-called wonderful fulfilments and refers them to the proper period of their occurrence, towards the fall of Jerusalem. And finally, these interpolators were not aware that Luke, by unconsciously referring the time of the birth of Jesus to the period of the Cyrenian taxation, overrides the anachronism which fixes the death of Jesus at the period of the Pilate procuratorship. But the pious fraud practiced by these forgers, history tells us, was part of a system which had the sanction of the early Church.

The pages of Edward Gibbon will supply evidence in confirmation: — "The 'Apology' of Tertullian" (Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus, c160-225CE,) he says, "contains two very ancient, very singular, but at the same time very suspicious, instances of imperial clemency; the edicts published by Tiberius and by Marcus Antoninus, and designed not only to protect the innocence of the Christians, but even to proclaim those stupendous miracles which had attested the truth of their doctrine. The first of these examples is attended with some difficulties which might perplex the skeptical mind. We are required to believe that Pontius Pilate informed the Emperor of the unjust sentence of death which he had

pronounced against an innocent, and, as it appeared, a divine person, and that without acquiring the merit he exposed himself to the danger of martyrdom; that Tiberius, who avowed his contempt for all religion, immediately conceived the design of placing the Jewish Messiah among the gods of Rome; that his servile senate ventured to disobey the commands of their master; that Tiberius, instead of resenting their refusal, contented himself with protecting the Christians from the severity of the laws, many years before such laws were enacted, or before the Church had assumed any distinct name or existence; and, lastly, that the memory of this extraordinary transaction was preserved in the most public and authentic records, which escaped the knowledge of the historians of Greece and Rome, and were only visible to the eyes of an African Christian, who composed his *Apology*, one hundred and sixty years after the death of Tiberius. The edict of Marcus Antoninus is supposed to have been the effect of his devotion and gratitude for the miraculous deliverance which he had obtained in the Marcomannic war [166-180CE]. The distress of the legions, the seasonable tempest of rain and hail, of thunder and lightning, and the dismay and defeat of the barbarians, have been celebrated by the eloquence of several pagan writers. If there were any Christians in that army, it was natural that they should ascribe some merit to the fervent prayers which in the moment of danger they had offered up for their own and the public safety. But we are still assured by monuments of brass and marble, by the imperial medals, and by the Antonine column, that neither the prince nor the people entertained any sense of this signal obligation, since they unanimously attribute their deliverance to the providence of Jupiter and to the interposition of Mercury. During the whole course of his reign, Marcus despised the Christians as a philosopher and punished them as a sovereign." (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 1, chap, vi)

From this it will be seen that these pious frauds were perpetrated as early as a hundred and sixty years after Pontius Pilate's recall, who, if he underwent a trial at all, must have done so before the tribune of Caius Caligula, Tiberius' successor. When the Christian religion was fairly before the world, and the report of the four Greek writers respecting its origin challenged general regard, *the necessity of affording some contemporary confirmation must have been felt*, and the story of these two palpable frauds gives an idea of the underhand maneuvering which would without scruple be resorted to. That mankind have in this matter been imposed upon is beyond all doubt, and it is for the historical student to inquire when and how the Pontius Pilate chronology was foisted upon the world by the Church.

The chief drawback is that to the great mass of the people, questions of this nature are not deemed very important, as they will not be persuaded that the main point is grounded in deception. Nevertheless many of our readers may have remarked that while we have argued for the late origin of the Gospels, we have said nothing bearing upon the date of the epistles of Paul, and we will now show that they were written after the fall of Jerusalem. In proof of it we will commence with quoting from Paul's alleged writings (I Thess. 2: 14-16): — “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen even as they have of the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost”

Paul evidently alludes here to the destruction of Jerusalem and the sufferings of the population. The wrath cannot be said to have come upon them to the uttermost

until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. See again in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. 12: 24-28: —
 “And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earthy much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, ‘Yet once more,’ signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” (KJV)

Again in Hebrews 13: 12-14: — “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. *For here have we no continuing city*, but we seek one to come.”(KJV)

No one can fairly come to any other conclusion than that this epistle, too, was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. It is to the Hebrews Paul is here addressing himself, and not to the Gentiles; and this language could not be used by him if the Temple and the city of Jerusalem had been still in existence. Notwithstanding the numerous attempts to falsify it, history proves this fact beyond all doubt, that Christianity had no existence prior to the reign of Domitian (81-96CE,) nor was it until long after this reign that it made any progress in the world. And one of these epistles, ascribed to Paul, bears evidence of having been written when there were Christians in Caesar's household.

In Phil. 4: 2, 21, he writes as follows: — "I urge Euodias, and I urge Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement, and the rest of my coworkers, whose names are in the book of life. (...) Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household." (NRSV)

Clement, as far as research has ascertained, was none but Titus Flavius Clemens, *a nephew* of the Roman Emperor Vespasian. He was the son of Titus Flavius Sabinus, consul in 52CE and *praefectus urbi* during the reign of Nero, and a brother of Titus Flavius Sabinus, consul in 82CE. Nero was the Caesar immediately prior to the fall of Jerusalem, and surely no one will be so foolish as to persuade us that there could be Christians in the household of Nero, of Vespasian, or of Domitian. History, too, points to a much later period, when Caesar's household consisted chiefly of the saints known to Paul; and as the declaration is made by Paul himself, it is surely not too much to expect that our version of the chronology should be regarded as fully borne out by an array of proofs all leading to the conclusion that *the new dispensation was conceived after the fall of Jerusalem*.

CHAPTER XIV

In Conclusion

After the destruction of Jerusalem much respect was shown to Josephus by Vespasian and his son Titus, who both listened to his counsels and acceded to his requests. And this is what Josephus relates in his *Life*, chap. 67: — "When I. was sent by Titus Caesar with Cerealius and a thousand horsemen to a certain village called Thecoa, in order to know whether it were a place fit for a camp, as I came back, I saw many captives crucified, and remembered three of them as my former acquaintance. I was very sorry at this in my mind, and went with tears in my eyes to Titus, and told him of them; so he immediately commanded them to be taken down and to have the greatest care taken of them, in order to their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered."

Now we do not say that this is the original of Luke's account, but certainly the coincidences are very remarkable. There is a Joseph, a counsellor, a rich man and a just, in both texts, with three men under crucifixion, of whom two die, and one is as good as restored to life again (Luke 23: 49-52): "And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding these things. And behold there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor, and he was a good man, and a just. The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them. He was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus." (KJV)

No other person referred to by the four Greek writers is designated, as here, by the name of a "*counselor*" the position of Josephus towards the Roman authorities,

while the description of the traditional writer, "*a good man and a just*," with equal truth applies to him; neither had he "*consented to the counsel and deed of them*," so far, at any rate, as concerned the continuance of the war.

The Messianic enthusiasm hailed chiefly from Galilee, and was the source of great crimes and much evil to the state. A passage from Gibbon will at this stage be appropriate: — "At the distance of sixty years, it was the duty of the annalist [He is referring to Cornelius Tacitus] to adopt the narratives of contemporaries; but it was natural for the philosopher to indulge himself in a description of the origin, the progress, and the character of the new sect, not so much according to the knowledge or the prejudices of the age of Nero, as according to those of the time of Hadrian. Tacitus very frequently trusts to the curiosity or reflection of his readers to supply those intermediate circumstances and ideas which, in his extreme conciseness, he has thought proper to suppress. We may, therefore, presume to imagine some probable cause which could direct the cruelty of Nero against the Christians of Rome, whose obscurity as well as innocence should have shielded them from his indignation, and even from his notice. The Jews, who were numerous in the capital [There were about 8,000] and oppressed in their own country, were a much fitter object for the suspicions of the Emperor and of the people; nor did it seem unlikely that a vanquished nation, who already discovered their abhorrence of the Roman yoke, might have recourse to the most atrocious means of gratifying their implacable revenge. But the Jews possessed very powerful advocates in the palace, and even in the heart of the tyrant, his wife and mistress, the beautiful Poppaea, and a favourite player of the race of Abraham, who had already employed their intercession in behalf of the obnoxious people. In their room it was necessary to offer some other victims, and it might easily be suggested that, although the genuine followers of Moses were innocent of the fire of Rome, *there had arisen among them a new and pernicious sect of*

Galileans, which was capable of the most horrid crimes. Under the appellation of Galileans two distinctions of men were confounded, the most opposite to each other in their manner and principles — the disciples who had embraced the faith of Jesus of Nazareth, and the zealots who had followed the standard of Judas the Gaulonite. The former were the friends, the latter were the enemies of humankind, and the only resemblance between them consisted in the same inflexible constancy, which in the defense of their cause rendered them insensible of death and tortures" (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol I. chap. 16)

This testimony is of great weight, justifying, as it does, the condemnatory judgment we have pronounced on the Galilean Jesus and his associates, whose character and principles were so diametrically opposed to those of the meek Jesus and his followers. The former were the enemies of mankind, and the latter were the friends, and the friendly and unfriendly principles of both are sought to be united into one by the four Greek writers. And the incongruity of the amalgam must be as obvious to the philosopher as to the historian. The friendship exemplified was of a beautiful type, full of self-abnegation and charity, and the meekness evinced a piety and devotion the very opposite of what proceeds from enmity.

Our readers will certainly recall the denunciation of the meek historical Jesus; we need not, therefore, repeat his utterances, but it is necessary to quote his principal one, in order to prove that John, the writer of the *Revelation* of Jesus the Christ not only painted his "New Jerusalem" after the similar description of the Old Jerusalem by Josephus (compare Wars, book V, chap. 5 §§ 7,8 with Revelation 21:9-23) but also used the historian's reference to *the words of the historical Jesus*: "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house,

a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people." (Book of the Wars, book VI.) John had obviously before this text when he wrote Rev. 7:1-3, "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." (KJV)

To conclude, we would quote from the alleged words of the traditional Jesus himself, as reported by the Greek writer, under the name of Matthew: "Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets, sages and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in you synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth from the blood of righteous Abel to *the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar*. Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation." (NRSV) Barachiah is the transliteration of Baruch and this Zechariah was indeed killed during the siege of Jerusalem just before 70CE. He was a contemporary of the historical Jesus and not of Pontius Pilate.

We think we have shown that the only authentic history of the period in question is that recorded by Josephus, and that the study of his pages fully warrants the conclusion that Christianity was invented by Greek writers after the destruction of Jerusalem, from several unrelated accounts concerning historical prototypes of the traditional Jesus. From this, as well as internal

evidence, we have felt entitled to argue that these Evangelical accounts are largely fiction.

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